

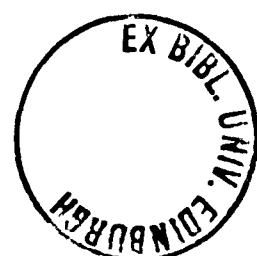
A CRITICAL EDITION OF THE MIDRASH ALEPH BETH  
WITH  
AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION, COMMENTARY AND  
INTRODUCTION

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## ABSTRACT

Midrash Aleph Beth belongs to the post-Talmudic collection of Jewish midrashim. Its structure and subject matter are centred on the Hebrew alphabet which provides sequential pairs of letters for the theme of each chapter. In the first part, the Midrash progresses from the first letter of the alphabet to the last, and its subject is the story of the universe from its creation to its destruction at the end of time. In the second and third parts, using different combinations of the alphabet, the story is told of the judgment and annihilation of all God's enemies in the heavens and on the earth. In the final part, a fourth combination of the alphabet is introduced to describe life in the World to Come for the righteous remnant of Israel.

In this Midrash we encounter ideas and beliefs that can be found in similar or parallel form scattered throughout Jewish midrashic literature. It is an extremely useful text in that most Jewish thought from the first millennium of the common era concerning cosmology and eschatology is here collected together in one work. In presenting an orthodox account of Jewish thought on these subjects, heterodox ideas, questioning, for example, the supremacy of God and his rôle as sole creator of the universe, are included to be proved erroneous. Hence the Midrash is in effect a significant depository of both Jewish heterodoxy and orthodoxy.

An edition of Midrash Aleph Beth, based on the one extant manuscript, was published by S. A. Wertheimer and subsequently reprinted with minor emendations by A. J. Wertheimer, but it has not hitherto been translated into any modern language. These editions are highly inaccurate with many differences from the manuscript, some of which seem to be deliberate alterations for dogmatic reasons. It is shown in this thesis to have no value as a basis for scholarly study.

The thesis presents a critical edition of the text (making use of, but not relying on the previous editions), accompanied by an English translation. An introduction and commentary attempt to explain the contents of the Midrash and place it in its textual and historical context, taking into account the most recent debates concerning the nature and function of Jewish midrash.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Ab.	Aboth
AB	Midrash Aleph Beth
Ab.Zar.	Abodah Zarah
Anak.	Anakhin
ARN	Aboth de Rabbi Nathan
b.	Babylonian Talmud
Ber.	Berakhot
Cant.R.	Song of Songs Rabbah
DBS	Dictionnaire de la Bible Supplément
Deut.R.	Deuteronomy Rabbah
EJ	Encyclopedia Judaica
Ex.R.	Exodus Rabbah
Gen.R.	Genesis Rabbah
Hag.	Hagigah
Hist.R.	History of Religion
HR	Hekhalot Rabbati
Hull.	Hullin
j.	Palestinian Talmud
JE	Jewish Encyclopedia
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
Lev.R.	Leviticus Rabbah
m.	Mishnah
Mek.	Mekhilta
Men.	Menahoth
ms	Manuscript
MT	Masoretic Text
Ned.	Nedarim
Num.R.	Numbers Rabbah
PdRK	Pesikta de R.Kahana
Pes.	Pesahim
PR	Pesikta Rabbati
PRE	Pirkê de R.Eliezer
R.H.	Rosh Hashanah

Sanh.	Sanhedrin
Shab.	Shabbat
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
Sot.	Sotah
SRdB	Seder Rabba de Bereshit
SY	Sefer Yesira
t.	Tosefta
Ta'an.	Ta'anit
Tam.	Tamid
VT	Vetus Testamentum
W	Wertheimer's edition of AB

## PART ONE

### INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

### I. The Text

#### 1. The Manuscript

The one known extant text of Midrash Aleph Beth appears in a lengthy ms which originated in Bokhara (1). This manuscript (henceforth ms) contains eighteen itemised texts, which themselves sometimes contain more than one complete text. The ms begins with the Alphabet of R. Akiba (pp.4a-44a) which is immediately followed by Midrash Aleph Beth. Our Midrash occurs in two parts in the ms: pp.44b-65b and pp.104a-120a. The rest of the contents of the ms are as follows:

3. Midrash Jonah, pp.69a-72b.
4. Midrashim, pp.120b-122b.
5. Alphabet of R. Akiba (recension B), pp.122b-126b.
6. Miscellaneous midrashim and The Words of the Wise, pp.151a-227b.
7. Midrash on the Song of Songs, pp.227b-239a.
8. The Chapter Concerning the Judgment, pp.239b-242b.
9. The Treatise of the Kallah, pp.243b-251a.
10. The Chapter Concerning the Garden of Eden, pp.251a-253a.
11. The Chapter Concerning the Judgment of the Grave, pp.253b-255a.
12. Miscellaneous midrashim, pp.255b-263a.
13. A Homily in Praise of the Torah, pp.264b-271a.

14. A Homily in Praise of the Torah and Those who Study it, pp.272b-277a.
15. Sa'adia b. Joseph Al-Fayyumi, pp.277b-278b.
16. Halakhic Judgments of R. Solomon, pp.279b-307b.
17. The Book of Balai, pp.311b-319b.
18. Halakhic Judgments concerning Niddah, pp.?b-?b (page numbers unclear).

The list of contents reveals that the ms is by no means completely preserved. This effects the text of Midrash Aleph Beth when we observe that where the first part of the midrash ends and Midrash Jonah begins three double pages are missing, and again where that midrash ends and the second part of Midrash Aleph Beth begins there is a gap from p.72b to p.104a. The last page of Midrash Jonah, which is next to the first page where Midrash Aleph Beth resumes, breaks off mid-sentence (המ הן) which allows us to conclude that these missing pages are not all from our Midrash but are also made up of pages from Midrash Jonah. Wertheimer, in his edition, includes a section of text which no longer exists in the ms, but, taking into account the alphabetical framework of the Midrash, it would appear that he inserted it incorrectly (2). In the body of the text two further pages are missing, pp.61b-62a (3). A colophon exists at the end of our text which names the copyist as El Nathan the Priest, son of R. Eliezer the Priest.

The ms, which now exists in a private collection in Jerusalem, originated in Bokhara in Central Asia, and is dated 1496. Although these facts do not necessarily help us in determining the place and

context for the actual composition of Midrash Aleph Beth, they do provide us with a context where Jews found a text such as ours both edifying and encouraging.

Bokhara was an early centre of Islamic culture and had a Jewish population which was at least as ancient (4). There is evidence of literary activity in the region from the fourteenth century when a Hebrew-Persian dictionary was completed by Solomon b. Samuel. The literary works of this region seem to flourish alongside the religious persecution suffered by the Jews at the hand of their Muslim overlords. One of the best examples of this dates from a later period, during the eighteenth century, in the reign of the fanatical Emir Mas'um when Khudaidad (El-Nathan) was martyred. This inspired the poet Ibrahim ibn Abu al-Khair to write an account of the events. A poignant illustration of the intense oppression of the Jews of Bokhara by the Muslims is found in Bacher and Adler's article when the former recounts a comment made by an African Jew, R. Joseph Moghrabi, visiting the country at the beginning of the nineteenth century:

O Lord! when will the time come that the followers  
of Jesus shall take possession of this country? (5)

After the Russians began their occupation of the territory of Bokhara in 1868, living conditions improved for the Jews. They were given full religious liberty and shared the same political and social status as other inhabitants. The economic success of the Jews under the Russians culminated in the establishment of a substantial



Bokharan settlement in Jerusalem at the end of the nineteenth century.

Adler speculates that although local tradition claims that the Jews of this region were descended from the Ten Tribes, since they are rabbinic Jews it is more probable that they are the descendants of Babylonian Jews who migrated to the east after the final conquest of Jerusalem by the Romans. They are a Persian speaking community which is reflected in most of the literature produced by them and translated for them.

The history of this community, particularly when they were under the control of Muslim powers, displays how a text like Midrash Aleph Beth would have been an inspiration to them. In its account of the history of the world from its inception to its destruction and replacement by the World to Come, our Midrash consistently vindicates the descendants of Abraham. They are the people of God for whom God created not only this world, but also the World to Come. The righteous, who are guaranteed to receive the rewards of the World to Come, are those who remain faithful to the Jewish faith as revealed in God's Torah despite all the evil powers at work in the world. According to the Midrash, martyrdom is the ultimate acceptable form of behaviour in the light of persecution (6). In a situation such as Bokhara under Islamic leadership where there was pressure on the Jews to conform and thereby avoid hostility through conversion to Islam, Midrash Aleph Beth could have been used both to strengthen the faithful and provide hope through its demonstration of God's eschatological justice.

The ms bears the date 1807 of the Seleucid era corresponding to 1496 C.E.

The first part of the text of Midrash Aleph Beth, pp.44b-65b, is particularly clear and easy to read. A later hand is evident throughout the text where biblical quotations have been completed in the margin, although these tend to be concentrated in the second part of the text, pp.104a-120a. Where the original copyist is conscious of making an error, this is corrected either by overlining or by a marginal note. The same copyist appears to be responsible for both parts of the text, although there is a marked deterioration of quality in the second part. In our edition words that remain unintelligible are noted and discussed in the ms notes.

## 2. Wertheimer's Edition

The edition of Midrash Aleph Beth in Abraham Joseph Wertheimer's Battei Midrashot, is a reprint of the edition first published by his father, Solomon Aaron Wertheimer in 1910 (7). That edition includes two recensions of the Alphabet of R. Akiba, Midrash Aleph Beth, and an introduction which discusses the ms and the contents of the midrashim. In Battei Midrashot, which is the most readily available version of the text, the edition published by S.A. Wertheimer in 1910 is simply reproduced alongside the two recensions of the Alphabet of R. Akiba with the same introductory notes. Revisions that are made to the text are simply corrections to the printed edition rather than emendations made in the light of further recourse to the original ms.

When we set these editions alongside the ms there are many discrepancies to be found. These can be divided into three types: material that is in Wertheimer, but not in the ms; material that is in the ms, but omitted by Wertheimer; and discrepancies in spelling, grammatical form etc.

The most notable example of the first type of discrepancy is to be found in chapter 12 (8). This chapter occurs at the point where the first part of the ms text of Midrash Aleph Beth ends (p.65b). Wertheimer does not break off at this point but continues for the equivalent of one more page of ms text. The content of the material that Wertheimer reproduces continues the theme of the chapter using the same style and language. There is no reason to suspect that it is the work of an editor rather than the original copyist. It would seem reasonable to assume that when the ms was in the hands of Wertheimer it contained this page which has subsequently been lost.

The examples of the second type of discrepancy are more disturbing since they tend to occur in places where the content of the Midrash presents theological ideas that are heterodox. If these are deliberate emendations to the text, then the edition of Midrash Aleph Beth that has been available since the beginning of this century is a censored document. The most notable example of this can be found in chapter 8 where Wertheimer's edition omits eleven lines of the ms (9). Furthermore, the text is emended to disguise the omission. The subject of the chapter is the trial of Satan and the omission occurs when Satan appeals against God's judgment on him.

According to the text of the ms, Satan argues that he was a partner with God when the world was created and this he uses as a defence against the accusation that he constantly meddled in the world's affairs. As co-creator he was entitled to meddle, and what is more, he should be beside God judging the world rather than being the object of God's judgment.

Although the Midrash recognises this for the heresy that it is, and consequently shows no mercy for its propounder, it is articulated in the text before being disproved and discarded. Wertheimer removes it from his edition and emends the text to conform to his omission. According to the ms text when Satan has given the account of his work in creation which included the creation of Gehenna, God replies to him as follows:

The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, 'Fool who is in the world, you say to me "I created Gehenna". So pass into the midst of Gehenna...' (10)

To be consistent with his omission Wertheimer emends this to:

The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, 'Fool who is in the world, you say to me "You created Gehenna". So pass in to the midst of Gehenna...' (11)

In another example of Wertheimer's censorship, this time taken from a later part of the Midrash, he tempers one of the instances of extreme anthropomorphism. After the enemies of God and Israel have been destroyed, the Midrash turns its attention to the rewards that await the righteous in the World to Come. One of the main features of the picture of the new age painted by the author of our Midrash is the relationship between God and the righteous. It

is a picture of striking intimacy where God and his people live side by side. There are no firmaments to act as boundaries between earth and heaven. The righteous receive wings, like angels, and are free to fly to and fro between the new earth and the new heavens (12). The climax of this intimacy is the description of the eschatological banquet where God is the father surrounded by his adoring family, the righteous (13). The children of this family comprise the souls of unborn children who are raised up with bodies by God in the World to Come (14). During the scene of the banquet these children clamber over God embracing and being embraced, together displaying all the emotions and antics of a human father fondly playing with his children. Such intimacy between the divine and human, which could be seen to bring God down to the level of humanity rather than take humanity to the level of God, seems to go beyond Wertheimer's level of toleration and verge on blasphemy. He omits the following passage:

(They sit) one by one on his neck, one by one upon his shoulder, one by one upon his throne, one by one upon his glory. AB 17.2.

Less substantial omissions are commented on in the textual notes as they occur. This applies also to the third category of discrepancies, that is, the frequent grammatical or spelling corrections and emendations that Wertheimer has made throughout the text. The innumerable scriptio plena revisions made by Wertheimer have not been noted. Since the ms text has been faithfully reproduced in this edition, these variations can easily be discerned by setting this text beside Wertheimer's edition.

One consistent grammatical tendency that can be observed in Wertheimer is his preference for tenses which ensure that the eschatological perspective of the Midrash remains in the realm of the unrealised. Examples of this occur with some frequency, particularly after chapter 6 when eschatology becomes the central topic. For example, where the Midrash uses a past tense to signify that the events being described have happened and are happening, Wertheimer omits הָיָה, hence changing the tense to the present. One example occurs in chapter 15 where God expounds the Torah in the presence of the righteous:

And the Holy One, blessed be He, has been illuminating the eyes of the righteous with the light of the Torah. AB 15.4.

Eschatological actualisation is a stylistic device which acts to reinforce God's promises to the righteous in the present. Similarly, in earlier centuries apocalyptic writers described eschatological realities in heaven as they experienced them during their heavenly journeys, although they had yet to be manifested on the earth. The more real the future bliss of final justification of the righteous in the World to Come can be made, the more encouragement there is for them to remain faithful whatever evil pressures may exist in the present world. The numerous examples of this type of revision by Wertheimer are noted in the textual notes as they appear.

In the introduction to his edition of the two recensions of the Alphabet of R. Akiba and Midrash Aleph Beth (15), Wertheimer states that he believes Midrash Aleph Beth belongs to the same cycle of literature as the two recensions of the Alphabet of R.

Akiba (16). He believes that the style and language of our Midrash prove it to be an ancient text. Wertheimer dates it after the Alphabet of R. Akiba on the grounds that its use of the alphabetical structure is more sophisticated. He notes that later midrashim become even more complicated in their use of the alphabet and dates Midrash Aleph Beth after the Alphabet of R. Akiba but before later works such as the books of Caphtor and Perah of R. Ashtori Al-Perahi.

He does not conjecture a specific date for either the Alphabet of R. Akiba or our Midrash, but he does note that the former is known to Sa'adya and his contemporary R. Ashtori Al-Perahi (17). Its antiquity is further borne out through the allusions to it found in Piyyutim, the works of Eleazar ben Kallir and Solomon ben Yehuda. We can conclude from Wertheimer's comments that he places both the Alphabet of R. Akiba and Midrash Aleph Beth in the gaonic period (18). From his study of the alphabetical structure found in the ms text of Midrash Aleph Beth, Wertheimer surmises that the ms in the hands of the copyist was incomplete or the copyist did not faithfully reproduce all of its contents (19).

Although, as he himself points out on more than one occasion in his introduction, Wertheimer was responsible for bringing the text of Midrash Aleph Beth to light for the first time (20), the text that he actually published was heavily stamped with his own style and theology. It is the aim of this edition to make available the text of the Midrash as it appears in its only extant ms form.

## II. Approaches to Midrash

During the second half of the twentieth century the academic study of midrash has come to occupy a central position in Jewish studies. This applies to the study both of the subject or genre in general and of individual midrashic texts. Not only has it attracted the attention of scholars in pursuit of an historical analysis of Judaism from the time of Ezra to the present day, but it has had applied to it modern textual theories in attempts to discover every conceivable level of meaning. A combination of both of these types of approaches can produce a balanced and instructive interpretation of a text which, whilst setting it in its historical context, allows it a contemporary existence. It is important for us to survey the modern debates about midrash in order to determine whether our text deserves its designation as midrash. It is entitled in the ms **שְׁרַר מִדְרָשׁ**, and this is upheld by the title given to it by Wertheimer, 'Midrash Aleph Beth'.

Before attempting to place our study of Midrash Aleph Beth in the context of contemporary study of midrashic literature, it is necessary to define our use of the term 'midrash'. One definition is given by Geza Vermes in his discussion of the early beginnings of Torah scholarship:

The theoretical work of the Torah scholars or sages was...essentially of two kinds: (1) to develop and establish the law (halakhah); and (2) to interpret the historical and religious-doctrinal sections of the Bible (haggadah)...The basic purpose of both halakhah and haggadah is to enquire into, and elucidate (in Hebrew **שְׁרַר**), the biblical text. 'Enquiry' (**שְׁרַר מִדְרָשׁ**) is not here taken



to mean historical exegesis in the modern sense, but a search for new insight on the ground of the existing text. The question asked was not only what the text actually says, but what knowledge could be gained from it by means of logical inferences, the combination of one passage with others, allegorical exegesis, etc. (21)

Another useful though narrower definition is given by Addison Wright who believes that the term midrash possesses two connotations, designating both a method of exegesis and a literary genre (22). This distinction helps to explain how individual passages of midrashic exegesis can be found in the midst of texts which, according to Addison, do not themselves belong to the literary genre of midrash. He describes midrash as follows:

...rabbinic midrash is a literature concerned with the Bible; it is a literature about a literature. A midrash is a text that attempts to make a text of scripture understandable, useful, and relevant for a later generation. It is the text of scripture which is the point of departure, and it is for the sake of the text that the midrash exists. (23)

More recently James Kugel has questioned this narrower definition of midrash, and like Vermes, he offers a much broader understanding of the term (24). But although like Wright he recognises a distinction between examples of midrashic interpretation within texts and midrashic texts themselves, he resists describing midrash as a literary genre itself, and instead, prefers to see it as the essence of almost all Jewish literature:

At bottom midrash is not a genre of interpretation but an interpretative stance, a way of reading the sacred text...The genres in which this way of reading has found expression include interpretive translations of the Bible such as the early Aramaic targumim; retellings of biblical passages

and books such as the "Genesis Apocryphon"...or the medieval "Sefer hayashar"; sermons, homilies, exegetical prayers and poems...tannaitic midrashim, exegetical parts of the Mishnah and the Gemara, collections of "derashot"...medieval commentaries on the Bible and other texts - in short, almost all of what constitutes classical (and much of medieval) Jewish writing. It is proper that this should seem an overwhelming broad field of inquiry, for at heart midrash is nothing less than the foundation stone of rabbinic Judaism, and is as diverse as Jewish creativity itself. (25)

Following such a broad and intangible definition, Kugel provides two more concrete characteristics of midrash. First, he sees the aim of midrash to be that of solving problems raised by specific biblical verses. This is related to his second, and more contentious, point:

...midrash is an exegesis of biblical verses, not of books. The basic unit of the Bible for the midrashist is the verse: this is what he seeks to expound, and it might be said that there simply is no boundary encountered beyond that of the verse until one comes to the borders of the canon itself - a situation analogous to certain political organisations in which there are no separate states, provinces, or the like but only the village and the Empire. (26)

This understanding of midrash articulated by Kugel met with fierce criticism from Jacob Neusner (27). Neusner holds that midrash operates in a much wider context than the single verse, 'the atom':

Kugel treats the midrash-compilations as scrapbooks, not collages. In my view the midrash-compilations of the canon of Judaism in late antiquity form cogent documents of integrity... (28)

The Neusner/Kugel debate revolves around the centrality of

scripture over and against rabbinic tradition, epitomised in the Mishnah. For Kugel scripture, the individual verse, is crucial. It is that which sparks off each isolated midrashic component. This unit of a verse of scripture and its interpretation had no wider context save that of Judaism itself. For Neusner the wider context of the rabbinic text in which each example of scripture and interpretation is found is crucial. For example, in the case of Leviticus Rabbah, the only way an individual verse and its midrash can be understood is in the light of the overall purpose of that book (29). This book he would regard as a composition rather than a compilation. Leviticus Rabbah merely uses scripture as a framework to profess a message for the late fourth and fifth centuries.

To discover a middle way between these two polarities we can take into account the contribution of Steven Fraade to the recent debate. Instead of siding with either scripture or tradition as the eventual champion in rabbinic Judaism, Fraade paints a picture of Judaism where both approaches co-exist:

...the Mishnah and the earliest midrashic collections may represent two complementary forms of discourse - code and commentary - which dialectically accompany and interpenetrate each other throughout their evolution in the history of Judaism. (30)

Fraade continues to forge his middle way by suggesting that rather than insisting, like Neusner, that the key to understanding the various passages in a rabbinic text lies in the wider context of the book as a whole, or, like Kugel, recognising only the verse and its midrash in total isolation, instead we should take account of the

immediate context of a passage (31). When applying these approaches to a specific text, in our case Midrash Aleph Beth, we will discover that the most useful are those of Fraade and Neusner. When we take a pericope out of its immediate context in a chapter or its wider context in the text, we might find many parallels in other midrashic literature, but we do not always discover its function and purpose in the particular text itself.

In his epilogue to What is Midrash? Jacob Neusner speculates on the theological meaning and function of midrash as it affects Judaism as a living religion. His presentation of the inter-play between Torah and midrash could be described as a hermeneutical circle, an idea that was articulated by Vermes some two decades before (32). Neusner describes this inter-play between scripture and midrash as follows:

Midrash reads the everyday as the metaphor against which the eternal is to be read, and the eternal as the metaphor against which the everyday is to be reenacted. (33)

Neusner emphasises that the primary aim of midrash is that of making Judaism relevant to later generations, and not only in an ancient context but also in modern times. Whether he means scripture or tradition by 'received revelation', is unclear:

Midrash legitimates innovation in the name of the received revelation, while preserving the vitality and ongoing pertinence of revelation in the present age. Eternity in time comes to realization in the processes of Midrash, which, through literary means, define a sacred society, a consecrated culture. (34)

The meaning of the term midrash can be seen to lie in its purpose: to interpret scripture in new situations. However, such a broad understanding of midrash could lead us to conclude, like Kugel, that all interpretation is midrash. This tendency is strongly resisted by Wright and in his conclusion he refines his definition further:

Midrashim exist in three forms, exegetical, homiletic and narrative, and they are accomplished in two ways: explicitly (the biblical text is presented and additional homiletical material and comments are assembled at the side of the biblical text) and implicitly (the interpretative material is worked into the text by means of a paraphrase). (35)

One example of midrashic biblical interpretation in a targum or apocalyptic text does not transpose those texts from their respective literary genres into the genre of midrash (36).

Midrash Aleph Beth falls neatly into the literary genre of midrash as defined by Wright. Although it is not a midrashic commentary on a particular biblical book, it consists solely of biblical texts and their interpretation. All of its narrative, which itself is weighted with biblical language and imagery, arises out of contemporary interpretation of specific biblical texts. It is haggadic midrash as opposed to halakhic in that it is concerned with homiletical traditions rather than legal passages. In recent years, particularly where scholars use midrash in the context of modern literary theory, there has been a tendency to equate midrash with haggadic midrash alone which is a gross distortion (37). In his account of Torah scholarship, Vermes clearly distinguishes two branches of midrash, haggadah and halakhah:

Haggadic midrash, i.e., the elaboration of the historical and religious-ethical parts of the Bible, is very different from halakhic midrash. Whereas the latter pre-eminently develops and carries further the material contained in the text itself, haggadah actually supplements and enriches it. It modifies scripture in accordance with the requirements and opinions of a later age. (38)

Vermes does not believe haggadic midrash to be a new phenomenon in early Judaism, but rather a literary development that is in direct continuity with the Bible itself (39). For example, he sees the work of the editors of the Pentateuch, who harmonised varied and disparate material into a theological and literary unity, as part of the source of post-biblical haggadah (40). Vermes illustrates how our knowledge of post-biblical haggadic exegesis can be used to throw light on the methods employed by the last editors of the Bible. His belief in the line of continuity from the biblical writers to rabbis displays the intrinsic unity between scripture and interpretation:

...it is not necessary for the written word into which living tradition is translated to become a dead letter. This written word carries within it a germ of spiritual energy capable of generating a new living tradition, which, in its turn, should breathe new life into the word. (41)

Although Vermes restricts his examples of haggadah to the first centuries C.E., we can observe that this unity is present in Midrash Aleph Beth too. It is apparent between the Bible and the haggadah, between what is being interpreted and its interpretation. It is manifested in the constant conscious and unconscious use of biblical language and imagery in the interpretation, and, conversely, in the contemporary interpretation found in the quoted biblical texts.

Despite not being a haggadic commentary based on a particular biblical text, Midrash Aleph Beth can be seen to be a unified and structured midrash by its alphabetical framework. This framework informs its choice of biblical passages that are to be interpreted, as well as giving the text an overall literary structure (42). Whereas midrashim such as the Midrash Rabbah collection use scriptural books for their structural framework, Midrash Aleph Beth uses the alphabet. It finds its scripture, not by taking a book of scripture and following its order through, but by using pairs of letters which provide a word or words, which in turn can be found in a particular verse of scripture. This verse will either be used to introduce others, or will itself provide the subject matter for the chapter.

The modern debates about midrash help us to uphold the ms and Wertheimer's definition of our text as midrash, even if we take the narrowest definition of the term. Having defined our text as midrash this facilitates our understanding of the text. It tells us, if we follow the argument of Vermes, that scripture is of central importance to the author and this in turn tells us that many clues to the meaning of the Midrash will be found in scripture. When working on the meaning of individual traditions in the text, like Kugel, we can take them out of their context in Midrash Aleph Beth and compare them to other examples of the same tradition in other texts. The form in which they appear in the other texts will help us to understand the reason for their particular form in our text, and consequently throw light on the intention of our text as a whole. Like Neusner, we can take into account the totality of the text. We can

use its meaning and purpose as a whole to understand individual chapters and passages. Finally, like Fraade, we can examine each tradition in its immediate context, in the case of Midrash Aleph Beth this is in its chapter, and learn from this context the meaning and function of each tradition. It would be a mistake to be deluded into believing that there is one definitive objective approach to understanding midrash. Each approach takes with it the past experiences and the future aspirations of each new commentator. Whilst recognising the subjectivity of our ancient midrashists, we would be naive to ignore our own. This is particularly apposite when we consider that we, as interpreters, are not instigating an interpretation, but are joining a history of interpretation. This history, according to Vermes, goes back to the biblical writers themselves - to the text itself. As Fraade points out:

Text and interpretation, along with mediating tradition, are as complexly intertwined in ancient midrash as in the history of its transmission and interpretation down to the present (43).

Employing a variety of approaches to midrash, rather than one on its own, should lead us to a full appreciation of the text.



# TABLE OF ALPHABETS

## 1. מראשו לסופו

א"ב	AB 1
ג"ד	Not used
ה"ו	AB 2
ז"ח	
ט"י	AB 3
כ"ל	
מ"ן	AB 4
ס"ע	
פ"צ	AB 5
ק"ר	
ש"ת	AB 6

## 2. מסופו לראשו

ח"ש	AB 7
ר"ק	
צ"פ	AB 8
ע"ס	
נ"ם	AB 9
ל"ך	
י"ט	AB 10
ח"ז	
ו"ה	AB 11
ד"ג	
ב"א	AB 11a ?

## 3. מסופו כנגד ראשו

ח"א	AB 11b ?
ש"ב	
ר"ג	AB 12 ?
ק"ד	AB 13 ?
צ"ה	AB 14
פ"ו	
ע"ז	
ס"ח	
נ"ט	
מ"י	
ל"ך	

## 4. מאמצעו לראשו ולסופו

ל"א	
מ"ב	
נ"ג	
ס"ד	
ע"ה	
פ"ו	
צ"ז	AB 15
ק"ח	AB 16
ר"ט	AB 17
ש"י	AB 18
ת"ך	AB 19

### III. The Function of the Alphabet in the Structure of Midrash Aleph Beth

As we have noted in passing, Midrash Aleph Beth is structured around the Hebrew alphabet, and in the preface to the text the way in which the order of the alphabet is used and the letters are combined is outlined (44). It is not clear whether this preface is integral to the text or was added by a copyist as a type of list of contents for the midrash. According to the preface there are four arrangements of the alphabet, using pairs of letters, in the Midrash (45):

1. forward א"ב etc.; 2. backward ז"ח etc.; 3. the last letter with the first, ח"א etc.; 4. the middle letter with the first א"ד etc. (45A).

Wertheimer's edition gives five alphabet arrangements in the preface. The extra one, ז"חא, combines the first letter with the last. There is no evidence whatsoever of this combination in the main body of the text. Wertheimer's addition corresponds to emendations written in the margin and in between the lines of the ms in different handwriting to that of the copyist. Whether these emendations come from an earlier editor or the hand of Wertheimer himself cannot be ascertained (46). To return to the ms text, all the four combinations of the alphabet appear in the main body of the text, although not all are complete. The first, א to ב, is complete except for one pair of letters ד"ה. This omission is discussed in the commentary on chapter 2 (47). The second, ח to א, is complete up to the last pair of letters ב and א. The third, the last letter with the first, ח"א, has only the two pairs of letters ד"ח and ו"א.

fourth, the middle letter with the first, begins with the seventh and eighth pair of letters ו"צ and ק"ן.

On close examination of the extant ms text, particularly of the passages immediately before and after missing pages of ms, it is apparent that we may possess more chapters, or rather fragments of chapters, than were evident at first glance. For example, pages are missing between the end of chapter 11 and the beginning of chapter 12. The point in the alphabetical framework where this occurs is at the end of the second combination of the alphabet and the beginning of the third. It is possible to surmise that the chapter based on the final pair of letters of the second combination, א"ב, is completely lost (chapter 11a), but that we have most of the text of the first two pairs of the third combination ב"ש, א"ן (chapter 11b) (48).

The gap between the end of the third combination and the beginning of the fourth cannot be accounted for by missing ms pages since the ms runs continuously at this point. All that can be observed is the usual end to one chapter and the beginning of the next - on the same ms page. If we take the complete combinations of the alphabet to be a guide to the total contents of the text, then we would have to conclude that a large section of it is missing, comprising the end of the third combination and the beginning of the fourth. In all, this would mean that at most eleven chapters were missing, taking only a single pair to head each chapter; at least six, taking two pairs of letters for each chapter. Wertheimer concludes

from this that either the earlier ms that was used by our copyist was not complete, or that he did not wish to copy the whole text (49). A third possibility is that the Midrash itself was not complete, or, rather, as we hope to demonstrate, that although the alphabet combinations are not complete, the narrative is.

It is important to be able to isolate the four different combinations of the alphabet since they provide a fourfold structure to the whole text. This is evident from the one extant example we possess of the end of one combination and the beginning of the next which occurs at chapter 7. Along with the usual pairs of letters that come at the beginning of a chapter, we find the title 'Tractate of Satan'. The previous six chapters had described God's work from the moment he decided to create the world until his destruction of it and the subsequent creation of the World to Come. The purpose of these chapters seems to be twofold. First it provides a commentary on the story of creation, which includes an account of the disobedience of Adam and Eve. Secondly, it acts as an overture to the rest of the Midrash. Key themes such as the rivalry between the angels and humanity, punishment, alienation between God and humanity, the creation of the World to Come, and the rewards of the righteous all appear, preparing the reader for their fuller treatment in the next three parts. The second part, the second combination of the alphabet, as its title the Tractate of Satan indicates, is concerned with the judgment of the wicked angels, namely Satan and his retinue, the heavenly enemies of God and Israel.

Although it is the shortest section, from our reconstruction of the third alphabet combination, and looking at the contents of this part of the Midrash, it seems to be concerned with the punishment of the earthly enemies of God and Israel. It describes the wars between the Messiah and Gog and Magog. If we believe that the original text went through the whole of this alphabet combination, then, like Wertheimer, we must conclude that the end of this section is missing. If, however, we concentrate on the contents of the narrative of this section, then we could argue that chapter 14, the letters ו"ד and ז"ה, concludes this section. The previous chapter, chapter 13, describes God all alone and the promise of the creation of the World to Come. That is to say, all the enemies have been destroyed and the way is clear for the creation of the new world. Chapter 14 seems to continue this concluding theme by beginning with the statement that God punishes the present world, but as a result of that punishment, a new world will come into being. Chapter 14 functions as a pivot between section three and section four. It comments on divine punishment, and introduces the theme of the World to Come which is the main subject of the final section.

The final part, the fourth combination, concerns the World to Come. When we look at this final section and take into account the alphabetical combination that is being used, again it would seem that a substantial section is missing. And again we can argue that this need not be accidental. This time the 'missing-section' occurs at the beginning of the alphabet combination. When we look at the first chapter of this combination, chapter 15, we find that it begins with God moving his glory into the World to Come and being joined by the

resurrected righteous. Flanked by Moses and Zerubbabel, God delivers his eschatological discourse on the Torah in the eschatological Beth HaMidrash. This seems to be a highly appropriate beginning to a commentary on the life of the World to Come. This section concludes the Midrash with myriad promises concerning the pleasures and delights awaiting the righteous in the World to Come. The final chapter presents the risen Moses who, in reward for his life of obedience to God's will, epitomised in his vicarious death, receives gifts and honours which surpass human imagination.

When we observe the overall fourfold structure of our Midrash, apart from the instances where the ms is demonstrably incomplete, it is possible to argue for the unity and integrity of the text. The contents display a unity of structure. This structure takes us from the moment God decided to create the present world, to his judgment of it and all the forces of evil of both heavenly and earthly origin, to the creation of the World to Come and the installation therein of the righteous, destined to spend eternity enjoying God's presence in their midst.

Although, as is constantly shown in the commentary, the haggadic traditions contained in the chapters of our Midrash are by no means the creation of its writer, the shaping of these traditions within a text into an overall structure, as well as the structure of the individual chapters, is original, and allows us to regard it as a composition as opposed to a compilation, and its writer as an author rather than an editor or redactor (50).

The structure of individual chapters is based on the given pair or pairs of letters dictated by the four alphabet combinations used in the Midrash. These letters are used to provide words, usually verbs, which either match a scriptural phrase linguistically or thematically. This scripture is then interpreted in typical haggadic fashion, with the introduction of other passages from scripture interspersed with tradition.

What should be noted is that Midrash Aleph Beth is primarily a commentary on scripture rather than on the Hebrew alphabet itself. Unlike other midrashim based on the alphabet, it does not speculate on the meaning or power of the letters themselves. For example, recension A of the Alphabet of R. Akiba describes how the letters, beginning with the last letter  $\aleph$ , compete with each other for the honour of beginning creation (51). Here there is a superficial similarity with Midrash Aleph Beth in that the alphabet, going from the last letter to the first, provides a framework for the text. However, in our Midrash the letters themselves never govern the contents of a chapter. Recension A of the Alphabet of R. Akiba ends with a haggadic discourse on the physical shape of the letters. The contents as well as the structure of recension B are also prompted by the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In this case it is the actual names of the letters that prompt the discussion (52). Versions also exist of the Midrash of R. Akiba concerning the Tagin, the crowns which ornament the letters (53). Again only the use of the alphabet offers any comparison to our Midrash.

Another text which bears a superficial similarity to Midrash Aleph Beth is the Alphabet of Ben Sira. Apart from its alphabetical arrangement, this text cannot be compared to ours either, since its contents bear no resemblance whatsoever to our text. The Alphabet of Ben Sira exists in two versions, comprising twenty-two popular proverbs, in Aramaic and Hebrew respectively, accompanied by haggadic commentaries. It is not strictly speaking a midrash at all, since it bears no relation to scripture.

It is important to distinguish our Midrash from other alphabet texts. In the case of the Alphabet of R. Akiba, there has been confusion in many people's minds, since it appears in the same ms as the Alphabet of R. Akiba and is published by Wertheimer alongside it. Midrash Aleph Beth has thus been seen to be simply an alternative version of that text. The two, including both versions of the Alphabet of R. Akiba, are totally distinct. Our Midrash is not interested in the form of the letters of the alphabet, or in legends about them. It is a text that demonstrates from scripture God's plan of salvation for the righteous. The alphabet merely functions as an alternative structural framework for that message. We might speculate that underlying this choice of structure is the tradition, known to us from Sefer Yesirah, that God's work of creation came about through combining the letters of the alphabet. In our Midrash, however, the alphabet has no power in itself to create. It is dependent on God as the prime mover who is intimately involved in his created world. Indeed a striking feature of the Midrash is the extreme anthropomorphism in its portrayal of the divine, in contrast to the transcendence found in the mystical tradition. The scriptures



bear witness to God's work in creation, and, in a sense, the alphabet is dependent on them for its meaning and energy. In Midrash Aleph Beth it is scripture that contains the power of God. Interpreted correctly, it is found to contain all the secret knowledge pertaining to the heavens and the earth, from creation to the eschaton and beyond. Midrash Aleph Beth is not an esoteric or magical text, and this observation marks it out not only from Sefer Yesirah, but also from the Alphabet of R. Akiba and the rest of the corpus of Jewish mystical texts. This brings us to the question of its contents, purpose and context.

#### IV. Contents, Purpose and Context

These three subjects are discussed together since any observations we may make about them are interrelated and interdependent. The only evidence we possess is that provided by the text itself, as there is no secondary literature that relates to it directly. Hence the contents are crucial in discerning its purpose. If that can be discerned, then we can begin to speculate on the type of context, both historical and geographical, out of which our text arose. In respect to the purpose of the Midrash, from our reading of the text it seems evident that this, in the main, is twofold. Our author takes on both the enemy without and the enemy within, that is to say, he deals with any rival system of belief outside Judaism, while also confronting heretical tendencies within. This will be demonstrated as we discuss the contents of the text.

When we first look at the contents of the text, we are struck by its extensive, explicit use of scripture in every chapter. The Midrash displays a catholic use of scripture, quoting throughout from all three divisions of the Bible: Torah, Prophets and Writings. The most popular scriptural texts are Isaiah and the Psalms. There are sixty-nine passages quoted directly from Isaiah, in comparison with nine from Jeremiah; and there are one hundred from the Psalms, in comparison with seventy from the Pentateuch. This is out of a total of 1,243 direct biblical quotations. The popularity of these texts can be accounted for by the subject matter, in particular, creation and eschatology.

Many passages of the Psalms and Isaiah have been traditionally recognised for their poetic descriptions of the wonders of God's creation, and the future hope of redemption for his people (54).

In the previous section we noted the non-mystical use of the alphabet in the Midrash, and how this is reflected in the intensive rôle played in it by scripture and its literal interpretation (55). Now perhaps we can use this as a starting point for discovering something more tangible about its purpose. Its interpretation of scripture, though ingenious at times, never borders on the abstract or esoteric. The Bible is taken as a concrete testimony of God's will and works, and its contents are plain for all to see. Our author draws together all relevant texts and their exegesis on the subject of creation and eschatology for all to be enlightened and instilled with hope. Furthermore, the concrete nature of the heavens, the World to Come, even of God himself, is stressed, again reflecting a preference for the physical over and against the metaphysical. If we regard such a use of scripture as a reflection of a 'down to earth' approach to Judaism as a whole, we can look for similar approaches recorded elsewhere in Jewish history.

When we attempt to place this attitude towards scripture in the wider context of Judaism, we find close affinity with Karaite scholarship. The Karaites were a sect that flourished from the end of the eighth century, although regarded as heretical by rabbinic Judaism (55A). Their main characteristic was to profess to follow the Bible to the exclusion of rabbinical traditions and

laws. The sect had popular and intellectual support. Many of its leading exponents lived in Palestine, and many of its early adherents were drawn from Egypt, Syria, Babylonia and Persia. Most importantly, the religious literature produced by the Karaites from the time of one of their ninth century leaders, Benjamin al-Nahawendi, was written in Hebrew.

Our author, like the Karaites, uses the Bible as his starting point and as his basic principle in all discussions, as opposed to rabbinic tradition, which is only introduced when it stems from the biblical text. Halakhah and haggadah do feature in the Midrash, but in a 'pure' form. The best example of this occurs in chapter 15 where God is the expounder of Torah, and the two biblical characters Moses and Zerubbabel are his interpreters. Not only is this an idealised picture, it is also an eschatological one with the righteous now raised in glory from the dead to debate with God in the heavenly Beth HaMidrash. Nowhere in the text do the names of particular rabbis appear. The nearest we come to any specific reference is the mention of the Ten Martyrs in chapter 8, none of whom is named (56).

We know that the texts which belong to the Alphabet of R. Akiba corpus of literature (57), and which are traditionally associated with our own, were denounced by an early leading Karaite and opponent of Sa'adya, Solomon b. Jeroham (58). One such text, the Midrash of R. Akiba concerning the Tagin, is not merely a description of how each of the letters should be

decorated, but also includes for each a metaphysical interpretation. For example:

ל (lamedh), the tallest letter, has its head bent downward, thus representing God, who is exalted above all and still looks down upon us (59).

A text displaying such an exalted view of the alphabet, that uses a letter of the alphabet, outside the context of scripture, to represent God, was bound to attract Karaite displeasure. The same could be said for the remainder of that corpus of literature, including both recensions of the Alphabet of R. Akiba. Our text stands in stark contrast to such literature. According to the midrashic method employed by our author, scripture alone reveals God's nature and purposes.

We can go no further than use the term 'Karaite tendency' to describe the pre-eminence of scripture in Midrash Aleph Beth. It bears little sign of other characteristics of fully fledged Karaism, for example, polemical attacks on the oral Torah. The type of rabbinic Judaism that seems to be challenged by our author, and some Karaites, is that which branches into esoteric speculation and loses sight of scriptural tradition. Holding this attitude he is also the enemy of philosophers such as Sa'adya. In particular our author would not have been happy with Sa'adya's translation of the Bible into Arabic. In this work Sa'adya was particularly aware of the need to modify references to God which might seem incredible to a rationally minded person, such as himself, who might conceive of God in a more abstract fashion. For our author the human language and imagery of scripture exist

to be emphasised, not excused. God creates the faces of angels with his finger, he destroys Satan with his own hands, and he eats with the righteous at the eschatological banquet (60). Sa'adya was the major antagonist of the Karaites; the latter, in wishing to make sense of the written Torah without the oral tradition, held a position Sa'adya attempted to prove untenable (61).

Both of these types of Judaism, the esoteric and the philosophical, are not countenanced by our Midrash and are directly attacked by Karaites. If we accept that our text displays proto-Karaite tendencies, rather than being a product of the sect itself, we could assume it to be a conservative corrective to texts that displayed esoteric and abstract theological tendencies. One such text could have been the Alphabet of R. Akiba. By adopting the same alphabetical framework as that text, our author produces an alternative Midrash to it, one that upholds the centrality of scripture and incorporates rabbinic tradition only when it serves the text, and not for its own sake. Instead of a rabbi, namely Akiba, being the central focus of the text, it is God who is the main character, introduced in the first chapter of our text as the Father (אב) of Israel, known to the world from the witness of scripture, not the speculations of rabbis. Our text may be a conscious corrective to the Alphabet of R. Akiba.

This tentative conclusion could help us to date the composition of Midrash Aleph Beth to a period soon after the circulation of the alphabet of R. Akiba. The latter belongs to the period when

the Hekhalot tradition was flourishing, which gives us a date in the fifth or sixth centuries as the terminus ante quem for our text (62). Further examination of the contents may provide a more precise time of writing.

Another internal Jewish debate that is reflected in our Midrash concerns the supremacy of God as described in the Bible. He alone is presented as the supreme force in the world with no higher authority in existence (63). The Midrash presents a scene in chapter 8 where Satan challenges such supremacy and claims to be a partner of God, particularly in creation. In our Midrash these ideas are raised merely to be destroyed. Satan's claims are denounced by God, and the latter's supremacy is ultimately proven when he casts Satan and his evil retinue into the fires of Gehenna. Whilst we might look outside the context of Judaism, for example, to Christian gnosticism or to Persian polemic, it is also possible to discover the origin of such heresy within Judaism itself. In his book, Gnosticism and Early Christianity, R.M. Grant suggests that ideas questioning the earth's creation as a result of a force for good arose in post-70 C.E. apocalyptic Judaism(64). Perhaps circumstances similar to the destruction of Jerusalem could have prompted such speculation at the time of the composition of our Midrash. When we take this point into account along with the picture given of life in the World to Come, a context in Palestine after the Islamic invasions suggests itself. Salo Baron notes that, although Judaism did survive as a religion, there was a process of assimilation especially in relation to texts written at that time:

It (Judaism) absorbed a great deal from its neighbors, just as it furnished them a great deal in return, but it incorporated all such borrowings into its own millennial tradition and reinterpreted them, even twisted them, into something new and peculiar to itself. (65)

In the descriptions of paradise in our Midrash, the type of assimilation described by Baron seems to have occurred. The Midrash remains indisputably Jewish whilst at the same time including material that is reminiscent of Islam. Instead of the usual rabbinic response to speculation concerning the World to Come, that is to quote Is.64:3 ('Eye hath not seen...') (66), Midrash Aleph Beth overflows with details. The most extreme example is an account of the sexual bliss designed for the righteous now raised with their perfect resurrected bodies (67). Such accounts are rare in Judaism, but not in Islam (68).

The stress on the election of Israel also points to a situation where Judaism as a living faith is being threatened. Throughout Midrash Aleph Beth we are reminded of the unique relationship between God and Israel . It is pre-existent since they are the *raison d'être* for the world, providing God with the motivation to create (69). When the evil angels are brought for trial, they are judged according to the way they behaved towards Israel. This relationship can only be realised eschatologically for those Jews who have remained faithful despite the pressures of the world. It is the righteous who are to inherit the World to Come, and the righteous are those who have perfectly obeyed God's will as revealed in the Torah. The prototype for the righteous is



Moses who was prepared to suffer vicariously in order to fulfil God's command. The Midrash ends with the figure of Moses elevated above all creation. Such a theology as this, which asserts as much the horror of life in Gehenna as it does the pleasure of life in the World to Come, would act as a deterrent to those who may be tempted to convert to Islam. Its commendation of martyrdom as a sure means of entry into the new age would strengthen the faith of those facing persecution.

The relationship between God and Israel is intimately bound up with the land of Israel, specially chosen by God for his people's possession. According to the Midrash, the Messiah will make a triumphal entry into Jerusalem, bringing the exiles with him, to defeat Gog and Magog who have occupied the land. God himself comes down from heaven and joins in the last battle to finally defeat the foe. The relationship with the land is accentuated by the use of the term 'Israel' to describe both the land and the people (70). This is another clue to the context for the origin of the Midrash. It would seem that the land has been overrun by enemies of Judaism, whose power is so great that the author is forced to seek an eschatological solution (71). Such a solution as this reflects the helplessness of the plight of those who fear for the end of the very existence of their faith in the light of a powerful alternative. This attractive enemy, with its own system of belief, seems to be vindicated by the supremacy of its adherents. Only divine intervention on the part of Israel's God can bring redemption, both political and religious, for his people. If the Bible is seen to be the source of knowledge concerning

God's will, then the blueprint provided by it, for example, in descriptions of the reign of King David, of God's people dwelling securely in their land could only lead to frustration and disappointment at a time of occupation. Salo Baron describes a new rise of eschatological, haggadic messianism which matched the rapid expansion of Islam. He comments on the way in which eschatological divine intervention was a real hope for Jews living in the Muslim world:

Notwithstanding their endless sufferings and the unceasing frustrations of all their petty messianic ventures, their unshakable faith in the ultimate coming of the Redeemer, under one guise or another, remained their perennial source of strength and endurance (72).

God had to allow Satan to roam freely in the world until the eschaton, in order to explain the present calamity (73). Those Israelites who remained faithful despite the force of evil in the world, throughout its history, will be rewarded at the end of history. They are the righteous. The author maintains a sense of immediacy by employing eschatological actualisation in his work (74). This is achieved by recounting the life of the World to Come in the present tense. In essence, the author is writing from the new age, explaining how existence in it can be achieved. God's judgment of the world is ensured. The World to Come is created for the sake of the righteous (75).

We can surmise from the Midrash that times of persecution aid God by clarifying the identity of the righteous. Conversely, they give the righteous the opportunity to display the steadfastness of

their belief. This is as far as the Midrash goes towards an explanation as to why God has not intervened in previous ages. Moreover, the character of Satan gives the writer an opportunity to portray the power of God, when in his reality all that is apparent is his weakness.

One of the main themes in the Midrash that we have not yet discussed is its portrayal of the rivalry between the angels and humanity. This occurs throughout the text, from the angels using the sin of Adam and Eve to justify their original opposition to the idea of creating humanity (76), to the usurpation of the angels' place in the presence of God by the righteous in the World to Come (77). In chapter 4 the angels regain God's presence in the heavens after the sins of humanity cause him to flee from the earth to the seventh heaven. Their victory lasts until the eschaton when they are destroyed along with the heavens and the earth (78). The angels failed God. It was from their ranks that Satan came. Despite humanity's unpromising start, its creation was redeemed by the righteous. Only the righteous truly deserve to share in God's presence, and this they do in the World to Come. God's original plan for creation is realised in the new age where he creates a throne of glory for his dwelling on the new earth, not in the new heavens (79). God dwells with humanity like a father with his children. This picture is the utopian ideal, presented by our author as an alternative to the misery of the present. The angels are used as a means of depicting the extent of the intimacy to be experienced by the righteous in the World to Come. They will be like angels, not only in possessing wings, but

also in their proximity to God. Humanity, namely Israel, is God's own possession, a loving creation, with which the angels cannot compete.

The denigration of the angels is also consistent with the Midrash's anti-esoteric stance. Mystical texts, including the Alphabet of R. Akiba, tended to speculate on angelology affording individual angels, especially Metatron, such pre-eminence that they could be confused with God (80). Our author shows no curiosity about the heavens and their creatures for their own sake. He does not wish for journeys to heaven to experience God's glory, but rather looks for its manifestation on earth, the new earth.

We may conclude that our Midrash was composed in Palestine sometime during the seventh and eighth centuries. This is borne out by the language in which the text is written. The language displays all the main characteristics of Mishnaic Hebrew (81). These include the third person masculine plural pronominal suffix ךְ-, and the masculine plural ending ךְי-, the demonstrative pronoun אֵלּוּ, and the demonstrative with אַת (e.g. בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה), the infinitive and third person feminine singular perfect of Lamedh Aleph verbs (e.g. לִבְרֹאת [Wertheimer emends to biblical Hebrew לִבְרָא] and יִצְתָה), and the infinitives of Pe Yodh verbs (e.g. לִירֹד). The normal Mishnaic Hebrew tense system is used: participle = present, perfect = past, imperfect = future. Mishnaic vocabulary includes the noun חֹמֶם 'nose' in preference to אֵף, which is reserved to mean 'anger' alone (82), also פְּטִילָא 'retinue'

and **לימרא** 'measure', and the frequent use of the noun **שעה** for 'hour'. The developed use of scriptio plena (e.g. **סידרי**, **ליפרע**, **פּוֹצִיעַ**) could place it in the pre-vocalisation period when Mishnaic Hebrew was still being used (83).

In negative terms it is a conservative text, written as a corrective to certain non-biblical tendencies developing within Judaism. In positive terms it proclaims the justification of the righteous of Israel over all the nations of the world. It was written to instil hope in the hearts of those who would still live God's Torah despite the attractions of other faiths and persecution at the hands of the servants of Satan. Moses is the central figure for our author since it is he at the beginning who is predestined to mediate the Torah to Israel - he is the Torah's bridegroom (84) - and it is he at the end who provides the ideal for Israel to imitate. He is the hero of our text, dying a martyr's death in his fulfilment of the words of Is.53. He is exalted, we might say even above the Messiah, in his redemption (85).

Although the haggadic traditions contained within our Midrash are by no means original, their presence together in this one text is. Our author has brought together the numerous and varied traditions concerning, in the main, creation, judgment, and the World to Come, and arranged them in his fourfold alphabetical framework. The result is a powerful and structured text, and an invaluable source for one branch of early Judaism.

## V. This Edition

### 1. The Hebrew Text

The Hebrew text of our edition is an exact reproduction of the ms text. Where emendations are necessary they are suggested in the footnotes. These footnotes also draw attention to the more important textual emendations that were made by Wertheimer in his edition.

### 2. The Translation

The aim has been to render a translation that is as literal and consistent as possible while at the same time being in the form of readable English. Direct biblical quotations are marked by underlining. The translation used for biblical passages is usually the R.S.V.. On occasions when this translation does not concur with the meaning reflected in the narrative of the Midrash, the translation is my own. Suggested emendations appear in square brackets, [ ]; marginal notes in the ms in round brackets, ( ).

### 3. The Commentary

The main purpose of the commentary is to elucidate the meaning of the text as far as is possible. This has been attempted in the following ways: i. by looking at the biblical context of passages cited; ii. by looking at examples of parallel interpretations from haggadic texts; iii. by looking at both the immediate and wider context of particular passages as they occur in the Midrash itself.

As we explained above, the use of the Bible pervades the Midrash, both when it is referred to directly, and when it is alluded

to indirectly. To be able to understand the Midrash, we have to understand its use of the biblical text. Much of the material contained in the commentary is directed to that aim. The haggadic material contained in the Midrash is not original, and most of it is sufficiently popular to appear in many other contexts. We have resisted the temptation to pursue every parallel in existence for each tradition since this would have taken us too far away from the major concern of the thesis, the text of Midrash Aleph Beth. Parallels from other haggadic contexts are cited only in so far as they throw light on our text and not for the sake of their enumeration.

## Notes

1. This ms can be found in the catalogue of the Microfilm Institute of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. It is ms 22949, indexed under 'Kabbalah', and entitled Midrash Aggadah: Midrash Jonah. It is the ms used by S.A. Wertheimer in his edition of the text, Otiyyot of R. Akiba, Jerusalem 1910, which is reprinted in A.J. Wertheimer's revision of Battei Midrashot, vol.2, pp.421-429, (1952-65). Wertheimer claims that it is the only extant ms in the world, see *ibid*, vol.2,p.419; see below where Wertheimer's edition is discussed, pp.5-10.
2. See AB 12.5 and commentary.
3. See commentary on AB 11.
4. See JE, 'Bokhara', vol.III, pp.292b-296b; this article was written by W. Bacher and Elkan N. Adler. The latter visited Bokhara in 1897 after large parts of the region had been annexed by Russia; also EJ, 'Bukhara', by M. Altschuler, vol.4, pp.1470-1474.
5. ibid., p.294a.
6. See AB 19.4,8.
7. See above n.1.
8. See above n.2.
9. See AB 8.5 and commentary.
10. See AB 8.6.
11. Wertheimer, op.cit., vol.2, p.434.
12. See AB 14.21.
13. See AB 17.2-3.
14. See AB 16.1-5.
15. See above n.1.; this introduction can be found in two parts, introducing the Alphabet of R. Akiba and Midrash Aleph Beth repectively, in Wertheimer, op.cit., vol.2, pp.333-342 and pp.419-20.
16. ibid.



17. ibid.
18. ibid.
19. For a discussion of the alphabetical structure of Midrash Aleph Beth see above pp.20-26.
20. See e.g. op.cit., vol.2, p.419.
21. The History of the Jewish People, vol.2, p.339; see also pp.339-355.
22. Wright discusses the theory of literary genre in The Literary Genre Midrash, pp.27-31.
23. ibid., p.74. In this definition Wright concurs with Renée Bloch that the two primary characteristics of rabbinic midrash are 'le rattachement et la référence constante à l'Écriture' and 'l'adaptation au présent', DBS, 5, p.1266; Wright, op.cit., p.75.
24. Kugel, 'Two Introductions to Midrash', in Prooftexts, pp.131-155.
25. ibid., p.144.
26. ibid., p.145.
27. Neusner, Understanding Seeking Faith, vol.2, chaps 1 and 10.
28. ibid., p.16.
29. See J. Neusner, Judaism and Scripture: The Evidence of Leviticus Rabbah.
30. Fraade, 'Interpreting Midrash. 1. Midrash and the History of Judaism', in Prooftexts, p.186.
31. ibid., pp.186-187. Fraade sums up his criticism of Neusner as follows, if we follow Neusner's path: '...we risk, to revert to a well-worn metaphor, not seeing the individual trees for our attention to the particular forest among forests' (p.191).
32. See below p.17, and n.41.
33. What is Midrash?, p.103.
34. ibid.

35. Wright, op.cit., p.143.
36. See ibid., p.144.
37. See e.g. Fraade's criticism of Midrash and Literature, eds G.H.Hartman & S.Budick, in 'Interpreting Midrash. 2. Midrash and its Literary Contexts', Prooftexts, pp.292-293.
38. Vermes, op.cit., p.346.
39. Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, pp.127-177.
40. Such an understanding of the origins of haggadic midrash inevitably tends towards a broad definition of midrash. This prompts criticism from scholars such as Wright who would want to be more restrictive in the use of the term; see Wright, op.cit., pp.20-22.
41. Vermes, op.cit., p.177.
42. See above pp.20-27 for a discussion of the use of the alphabet in Midrash Aleph Beth.
43. Fraade, 'Interpreting Midrash. 1' op.cit., p.179.
44. See AB Preface.
45. This section is illustrated by the Table of Alphabets.
- 45A. Compare the similar methods used for constructing the tables of combinations of the letters of the alphabet in SY §21 (Gruenwald, 'A preliminary critical edition of Sefer Yezira', p.150.).
46. See AB Preface, Hebrew Text and Notes.
47. See AB 2 Commentary.
48. For further discussion of this section of the text, see Commentary on AB 11.
49. See Wertheimer op.cit., vol.2, p.419-420.
50. This appreciation of the overall structure is in line with the approaches to midrashic texts outlined by Neusner. Also, taking account of the internal structures of the many chapters, it is in agreement with Fraade's emphasis on the immediate context of passages within the text; see above pp.13-14.

51. See Wertheimer, op.cit., vol.2, pp.343-395. This speculation is based on traditions such as that found in Gen.R.1.10, where the letter X complains to God that 2 was preferred to it.
52. This would seem to be based on b.Shab.104a where we find a homiletic interpretation, given by the rabbis to R. Joshua b. Levi, of the names of the letters in alphabetical order. A passage of Enoch/Metatron speculation belonging to 3 Enoch is found in recension B; see P. Alexander, '3 Enoch', pp.224-225.
53. See Wertheimer, op.cit., vol.2, pp.467-477; R. Akiba is traditionally associated with the decoration of the letters; see b.Men.29b.
54. E.g. the Haftorah for Bereshit is Is.42:5-43:10. This passage reflects the power of God, the supremacy of Israel, and hope for the future - all key themes in Midrash Aleph Beth.
55. See above pp.25-27.
- 55A. For an account of the Karaite schism, see S. Baron, A Social and Religious History of the Jews, vol.5, pp.209-285.
56. See AB 8.2 and Commentary.
57. For a discussion of the Alphabet of R. Akiba and the literature associated with it, see above pp.25-26.
58. See K. Kohler, 'Alphabet of R. Akiba', and L. Ginzberg, 'Akiba's Book on Letter-Ornaments', in JE, vol.1, p.310a-311b.
59. Translation, ibid., p.311b.
60. See AB 5, 9, 17 respectively.
61. For an account of a dispute between Sa'adya and a Karaite, see L. Finkelstein, The Jews, p.130. For a discussion of the relationship between rationalism of the gaonic period and traditional haggadah, see, J. Goldin, 'The Freedom and Restraint of Haggadah', in Midrash and Literature, G. H. Hartman and S. Budick (eds), pp.57-76.
62. The dating of Hekhalot literature, in particular 3 Enoch, - a fragment of which is found in recension B of the Alphabet of R. Akiba - is discussed in some detail in P. Alexander, op.cit., pp.225-229.
63. This subject is discussed at length in the commentary to AB 8.

64. Pp.1-38.
65. Baron, op.cit., vol.7, p.59.
66. This attitude is discussed and contrasted to that found in our Midrash in the commentary to AB 6, 10 and 17. Is.64:4 first appears in AB 5.10 in the context of the World to Come.
67. See AB 14.32.
68. See, e.g., the Qur'an, Surah 55.
69. See AB 3.3.
70. AB 3.2-4 is a good example of this.
71. We could compare the contents and context of our Midrash with that of Jewish literature produced during the Roman occupation, particularly after 70 C.E. when not only had the land been overrun by the Romans, but much of Jerusalem, including the Temple, had been destroyed. By 135 C.E. the Roman conquest was complete, Jerusalem was renamed Aelia Capitolina and the Jews banished, (see G. Vermes et al, The History of the Jewish People, vol.1, especially pp.514-557. This experience generated some of the apocalyptic literature whose main feature was the eschatological solution to Israel's plight. It, like Midrash Aleph Beth, is highly nationalistic in content. Segal, Two Powers, pp.147ff, notes that dualistic theology tended to be associated with Palestine. This observation, along with the previous discussion leads us to prefer Palestine as the place of composition for our Midrash.
72. Baron, op.cit., vol.5, p.208; see also pp.138-208.
73. See AB 8.1-2.
74. Cf. the Dead Sea Scrolls where in their biblical interpretation they show their perspective to be that of living in the eschaton; also the the New Testament's use of the Joel prophecy in Acts 2:17ff.
75. See, e.g., AB 14.13-19.
76. AB 4.1.
77. AB 13.3.

78. See AB 5.5-7 and 13.1 where it is stressed that God destroys the angels, and does not create them anew in the World to Come.
79. See AB 17.8.
80. Cf b.Hag.15a where Aher, on a journey to heaven, mistakes the seated Metatron for a god.
81. This and the other characteristics of Mishnaic Hebrew are discussed by Kutscher, A History of the Hebrew Language, pp.115-147. See also, Segal, A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew.
82. See e.g. AB 11.14; ms has  $\text{QNN}$  rather than  $\text{QWN}$ .
83. See Kutscher, op.cit., p.151. 84. See AB 2.11.
84. AB 2.11.
85. See AB 19.6-10.

PART TWO

HEBREW TEXT

## HEBREW TEXT

### אחד מדרש

זמנין דרש מראשו וסופו<sup>1</sup> דרש מסופו לראשו, זמנין דרש מסופו  
כנגד ראשו, זמנין דרש מאמצעו לראשו ולסופו:<sup>2</sup>

את שדרש מראשו לסופו:

אב גר הו זח מי כל מן סע פצ קר שת:

את שדרש מסופו לראשו:

תש רק צפ עם נם לך יט חז וה דג בא:

את שדרש מסופו כנגד ראשו:

תא שב רג קד צה פו עז סח נט מי לך:

את שדרש מאמצעו לראשו ולסופו:

לא מב נג סד עה פו צז קח רט שי תך:

אב גר הו זח מי

1.1 כאיזכר א"ב זה הקב"ה שהוא אב לכל מראשו ועד סופו  
שבתחלה עד שלא יברא הוא היה<sup>3</sup> מהליך על כנפי רוח ועל שביבי  
סערה וארבע מיני מאורות של אש סביב סביב לו מתלקחות מלפניו  
כנגד ארבע רוחות העולם ואילוהן אש זהורה אש הדורה ואש אדומה  
אש לבנה<sup>4</sup>: זהורה פניה כנגד מזרח הדורה פניה כנגד מערב  
אדומה פניה כנגד צפון: לבנה פניה כנגד דרום:

2. אותה שעה היה העולם מלא מים במים גל בגל מחשל במחשל  
סופה בתוך סופה סערה בתוך סערה ושכינה על רום ראשיהם וקול  
דברו עליהם להשתיקן שנ' קול יי על המים אל הכבוד וג'

3. וארבע מיני חיות רוחות רבות סביבות לשכינה בכל שעה ושעה:  
ואילוהן רוח מרחפת רוח עזה רוח רעש רוח סערה: רוח מרחפת  
מנין שנ' ורוח אלהים מרחפת וג' רוח עזה מנין שנ' ויולך יי את  
הים ברוח קדים עזה וג' רוח רעש מנין שנ' ואחר הרוח רעש לא

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1. Read לסופו and insert זמנין, following W.

2. W inserts a fifth alphabet, אתב"ש, but this is not used by the author of AB.

3. W נברא היה הוא .

4. אש אדומה ואש לבנה W.

ברעש וג' רוח סערה מנין שנ' רוח סערה עשה דברו:

4. וכל רוח ורוח מוקפות על גבי ראשיהן גלגלי שכינה וכל גלגל וגלגל מוקפת על גבי ראשיהן<sup>1</sup> להט ולפיד גחל ולהבה סופה היתה רוכבו סערה היתה מושבו דירתו להט וגחלת מקומו אש מתלקחת שנא' כי הנה ייי באש יבוא וכסופה וג' ואומ' אש לפניו תלך:

5. ומקול שבחם של מים רבים נתן הקב"ה את דעתן<sup>2</sup> לבראות<sup>3</sup> את העולם ואחר כך בדברו ברא את כולם<sup>4</sup> שנא' כי הוא אמר ויהי הוא צוה ויעמד: ואומר והוא באחד ומי ישיבנה ונפשו אותה ויעש: סל'

2.1 פיר' ב. ה"ו ו"ח שהוא ממקומו ועמד בכוחו כגיבור נצב בגבורתו לבראות<sup>5</sup> ברצונו את כל עולמו גער במים וברחו מלפניו ועמד כאיש הבונים לבנות וליסד ימינו מפחה שבעה מעונות למעלה ידו יסדה ארץ תהומות למטה וברוח פיו צוה וברא את כל צבאם שנא' אף ידו יסדה ארץ וימינו<sup>6</sup> מפחה שמים וג' <sup>7</sup> ואומ' בדבר יוי שמים נעשו וג'<sup>8</sup>

2. קראם והעמידן אילו כנגד אילו ושם שמו עליהם שלא פורשו<sup>9</sup> קשרם<sup>10</sup> בסערה זה לעמת זה וחתמם בטבעת אהיה אשר אהיה כנפי שמים קשרה כנפי ארץ יסודי רקיע ביסודי חלד סידרי מרום בסדרי עמוק גבול מעונות בגבולו<sup>11</sup> תהומות כולם<sup>12</sup> חתמו<sup>13</sup> בטבעתו בשם אהיה אשר אהיה כדי שלא יחריבו את כל עולמו שכל המזכיר שם אהיה אשר אהיה בלא חותם מיד מחריב את העולם

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1. W omits גלגלי...ראשיהן by haplography.

2. Error for דעתו. W corrects.

3. Mishnaic form of לברא. W emends.

4. Ms unclear. W reads את העולם.

5. W לברא: cf. note 7 above.

6. Read וימיני with MT.

7. W omits 'וג'.

8. W omits 'וג'.

9. W [יפרשו].

10. Error for וקשרם: W corrects.

11. Error for בגבולי: W corrects.

12. Dittography: omit with W.

13. Read חתמן with W.



3. ואחר כך קראם ותלאם והעמידם בעולם וכולם עמדו בדברו ועד סוף העולם שנא' אל אלהים יי דבר ויקרא ארץ וג' ומנין שעמדו שנא' קורא אני אלהים<sup>1</sup> יעמדו יחדו:<sup>2</sup>

4. נמל קשר עולמו וקשרו בכסאו והעלה את כסאו לשמי<sup>3</sup> הרכין כבודו על ארבע חיות ושכינתו שוכן על אופני להט שם מרכבתו ועל<sup>4</sup> גלגלי אוכלה ומושב יקרו<sup>5</sup> על כרובי להבה נתעלה וישב ברומו של עולם

5. צופה מעשיו וראה כי טוב שנא' וירא אלהים את כל אשר עשה והנה טוב מאד וג' ואין טוב אלא הקב"ה שנא' טוב יוי לכל ורחמיו על כל מעשיו: באותה שעה צופה הקב"ה וראה את כסאו ואת כבודו ואת שכינתו ואת מושב יקרו ואת חיות הקדש ואת האופנים ואת הכרובים ואת הגדודים ואת החיילים שהן עומדין ברומו של עולם פתח את פיו בשבח עצמו ואמר יפה עשיתי שחקפתי<sup>6</sup> מקום לכבודי

6. מיד באו חיות ואופנים וכרובים וגלגלים שרפים וחיילים מתחת כסא הכבוד וסובבין בארבע רוחות כסאו והיו מגפפין אתו ומנשקין אותו ומרוין את שמו ברוב שירות הודאות ורננות זמירות ותושבחות ואומ' יהי כבוד יוי לעולם וג'

7. ד"א. והנה טוב מאד אין טוב אלא תורה שנא' כי לקח טוב וג' מלמד שבאותה שעה באת תורה מחדרי חופתה כשהיא מתקשטת בכל מיני תכשיטין ובכל מיני עדי מלכוון ועומדת ומרקדת לפני הקב"ה ומשמחת את לבו של שכינה ופותחת את פיה בחכמה ואת לשונה בתבונה ומשבחת את שמו של מקום בכל מיני שבח ובכל מיני זמרה:

8. באותה שעה אמ' לה הקב"ה בעצמו בכל רקיע ורקיע ואומ' החרישו לי כל קול יצור שיצרתי עד שאשמע קול שירתה של תורה וכשאמר לה הקב"ה הראיני את מראיך פורעת את פניה ויצתה

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1. Read עליהם with MT and W.

2. W emends to יחד with MT.

3. שמים omitted: W inserts.

4. Dittography: read על with W.

5. יקר W.

6. Error for תקנתי: W emends.

9. וכשאמר לה השמיעני את קולך נשאתה את קולה בשירה ובזמרה ובנעימה נאווה עד שנתרעש כל העולם כולו באותה שעה כל סדרי בראשית כולן שאלו זה את זה ואמרו מה כל רעש גדול זה ששמענו באותה שעה יצתה בת קול ואמרה תורה עצמה משבחת ומקלסת לפני הקב"ה שברא את העולם משיבין כל סדרי בראשית כולן<sup>1</sup> ואומרין תורת ייי תמימה משיבת נפש:

10. ד"א. והנה טוב מאד אין טוב אילא משה שנא' ותרא אתו כי טוב וג' מלמד שבאותה שעה גילה לו הקב"ה לתורה כסא הכבוד והוציא את כל אותן הנשמות של צדיקים נשמות<sup>2</sup> אברהם יצחק ויעקב שעושין את התורה ומקיימין את המצות קודם שנתנה תורה מיסני<sup>3</sup> והוציא את נשמתן של ישראל שהן מקבלין את התורה לעתיד לבוא ומעבירן<sup>4</sup> לפניה

11. ואחר כך הוציא את נשמתן<sup>5</sup> של משה מתחת כסאו שהוא עתיד לבאר את התורה בשבעים לשון והראהו לתורה ואמר לה בתי שישני ושמחי בזה משה עבדי שזה הוא עתיד להיות חתניך ובעליך<sup>6</sup> וזה הוא שהוא עתיד לקבלך<sup>7</sup> וליפרש<sup>8</sup> דיבוריך לששים ריבו ישראל: באותה שעה משיבה תורה ואמרה לפניו עד אימתי יגיע זמן שמחתי אמ' לה מיום שאברתיך עד שניתמלא אלף דור שנ' וכל העולם דבר וג' סל'

3.1 פר' ג. ט"י כ"ל שהוא מוען כל תחת זרעותיו שנא' ומתחת זרעות עולם זרוע עולם לא נאמ' כן<sup>9</sup> אלא זרעות עולם מלמד שהשמים ושמי השמים וכל אשר בהן תלאו<sup>10</sup> תחת זרועו של<sup>11</sup> שמאול

1. W omits כל סדרי בראשית כולן.

2. נשמת.

3. Error for מסיני: W corrects.

4. Error for מעבירין: W corrects.

5. Error for נשמתו: W corrects.

6. בעליך.

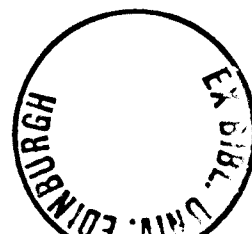
7. Error for לקבלך: W corrects.

8. Error for לפרש: W corrects.

9. W omits.

10. Error for תלאן: W corrects.

11. Insert של, following ימין והארץ וכל אשר בה תלאן תחת זרועו של W. See comm.



2. ומעולם אין שינה ואין תנומה לפניו והוא שומר ברחמיו את כל העולם שנא' <sup>ה</sup>לא ינום ולא יישן שומר ישראל וכי אין לו בעולם אלא ישראל בלבד והלא שבעים אומות בעו' כתב<sup>1</sup> בשבעים לשון ושאר כל הבריות יש לו בעולם וכל מעשי<sup>2</sup> ידיו הן ומה תלמוד לומר שומר ישראל אלא מלמד שכך אמרה רוח הקדש אין אני יודע בעולם אלא ישראל בלבד שנא' רק אתכם ידעתי וג'

3. ולא בראתי את עולמי אלא בשביל ישראל שנא' כה אמר יי אִם לא בריתי ש' א' וג'<sup>3</sup> שעושינ את התורה ומקיימין את המצות שאין העולם קיים אלא בזכותן שאינן פוסקין שעה אחת תורה מפיהן שאין בריתי האמור כן אלא ישראל שנא' וזכרתי את בריתי וג' ואין יומם ולילה אלא תורה שנא' והגית בו יומם ולילה וג'<sup>4</sup>

4. ואין לי כלי חפץ בעולם אלא ישראל שאלמלא ישראל אין לי קורת רוח בעולם שנא' ויאמר לי עבדי אתה י' א' ב' ע'<sup>5</sup> וג'

5. ד"א ומתחת זרועות עולם כמה זרועות סובלות תחתונים סובלות שמנת עשר אלפים עולמים שהן מקיפין סביבות העולם הזה: סובלות מאה ועשרים אלפים עולמים של עולם הבא:

6. ד"א ומ' זר' עול' כמה זרועות משובחות בכמה מקומות בהיגלות לעשות נס משובחות בשעה שנעשתה אותות ומופתים במצרים שנא' הנה יד יוי הויה וג' משו' בשעה שקרע את הים לפני בניו שנ' מוליך לימין משה זרוע תפ' וג' מש' בש' שנפרעת בים שנ' ימינך יי נאדרי בכח וג' מש' בש' שהשתיק מימי הים עד שעברו גאולים שנ' בגדל זרועך ידמו כאבן: מש' בש' שהשליך יוחני וממרא<sup>6</sup> לתהום התחתון שנא' נפית ימינך וג' מש' בש' שניתנה תורה לישראל במדבר שנא' מימינו אש דת<sup>7</sup> למו: מש' בש' שהיא עתידה<sup>8</sup> ליפרע מאומות העולם שנא' חשף יוי את זרוע קדשו וג' מש' בש' שהיא עתידה<sup>9</sup> לבנות את בית המקדש שנא' מקדש יוי כוננו ידיך:

1. W omits. Abbreviation for כתבות?

2. Haplography: read כלם with W.

3. W adds [אלו ישראל].

4. W omits.

5. Error for א'.

6. פרעה in margin. W omits.

7. אשדת W.

8. שהוא עתיד W.

מש' בש' שהו<sup>1</sup> עתיד להלביש עוז לצאן<sup>2</sup> שנא' עורי עורי לבשי  
עזר: מש' בש' שהוא עתיד<sup>3</sup> לעשות דין לכל אומות העולם שנא'  
ותאחז במשפט ידי וג'.<sup>4</sup> סל'

4.1 פר' ד. מ"ן ס"ע מלך שנסע שכינתו לכרובי עוזו שבתחלה  
היתה שכינתו בארץ בתוך גן עדן עד שלא באו לעולם בני דור  
המבול ועברו על שבע מצות שנ' ויגרש את האדם: וכיון שבאו  
בני דור המבול לעולם ועברו על ז' מצות ומרדו בו בהקב"ה שנא'  
ויאמרו לאל סור ממנו: מיד באו מלאכי השרת ועמדו לפני הקב"ה  
ואמרו לפניו<sup>5</sup> רב' ש' עו' מה לך אצל בני אדם ומה טיבו דירתך  
אצל בני אנוש לא לכתחלה אמרת<sup>6</sup> לפניך אל תבוא<sup>7</sup> אדם ולא  
סופנת אותנו ולא השגחת בדברינו<sup>8</sup> שנא' מה אנוש וג'

2. ומה עשו מלאכי השרת באותה שעה נמלו כל אחד ואחד  
שופרות וחצוצרות ותקעו בשופרות ויריעו בחצוצרות ורנו את<sup>9</sup>  
הקב"ה בשירות ותושבחות ובקול<sup>10</sup> שנ' אל נערץ בסוד קדושים  
רבה והעלו את השכינה בתרועה וקול שופר למרום שנא' עלה  
אלהים בתרועה

3. וכיון שראה שר העולם וכל סידרי בראשית שכינה למרום  
לבשו כולן אבל ועצפו יגון ואנחה שנא' על כן תאבל הארץ וג' מיד  
יצתה בת קול ואמרה להן השמים שמים ליוי וג':

4. באותה שעה היו שמים ושמי השמים שמיחין ועליוזין והיו  
מלבישין לבוש שמחה<sup>11</sup> וששון ועטופים פאר גילה ורנה והיו  
עושים שמחה רבה לפני השכינה וחמה ולבנה וכל כוכבים ומזלות  
היו מרקדין לפני כסא הכבוד ולפני הגבורה והיו מספרים כבוד

---

. שהוא עתיד W.

1. Read הוא with W.

2. Error for ציון: W corrects.

3. W omits הוא.

4. W omits וג'.

5. W omits.

6. Error for אמרנו: W corrects.

7. Error for תברא: W corrects.

8. W omits בדברנו.

9. W emends to לפני.

10. W omits בקול.

11. W omits.



ושמי השמים משבעה רקיעין ולמעלה אין להן רשות לא למלאכים ולא למפסרים ולא לאראלים ולא לשרפים ולא לאופנים ולא למלאכים ולא לחיות הקדש ולא לגלגלי המרכבה ולא לשרים הגדולים ואפילו לא לשר הפנים ולא שבעה<sup>1</sup> שרים הפנים גדולים רמים רבים ונכבדים קרואים בשם יושב הכרובים שהן רואין את פני המלך ויודעין ברזי שכינה אין להן רשות לעלות ולירד לבית מסתרים של שכינה אלא הקב"ה בעצמו מפני שהוא בית מסתרים שלו והוא יושב בלבד בסתר מכולן שנא' יושב בסתר עליון: סל' פר'

5.1 ה'. פ"ץ ק"ר על שום שפיו צוה ונבראו משרתיו שנ' כי הוא אמר ויהי וג' ונברא<sup>2</sup> חדשות חדשות בכל יום ויום<sup>3</sup> שנא' חדשים לבקרים וג'

2. וכאיזכר בורא הקב"ה את משרתיו ודובר דברו וימלא היכלו אש ותעמודנה שורות שורות כנגד כסא הכבוד והקב"ה צרם<sup>4</sup> באצבעו קטנה צורת פניהן כל מלאך ומלאך וכל שר ושר ואחר כך רוח ונשמה היפיח בהן והעמידן על רגליהן והיפקיח עיניהן וכיון שהן רואין את כסא הכבוד נפלה אימת שכינה עליהן והן נופלין על פניהן ואומרינן אין כמוך באלהים ייט<sup>5</sup> וג'

3. ק"ר שהוא קורא את כולן ועומדין לפניו וכל אחד קורא את כולן<sup>6</sup> שמותן לפי מעשיהן והפקידן כל אחד ואחד על עבודתן זה ממינה על עבודת השיר לקרות מלאך השיר וזה ממנה על עבודת<sup>7</sup> השבח לקרות מלאך השבח וזה ממנה על עבודת הכסא: לקרות מלאך שמש<sup>8</sup> בכסא: וזה ממנה על עב' הרוח לקרות מלאך הרוח: וזה ממנה על עב' האש לקרות מל' האש: וזה ממנה על עב' המטר לקרות מל' המטר: וזה ממנה על עב' הזעם לקרות מל' הזעם: וזה ממנה על עב' הברד לק' מל' הברד:

4. ואחר כך הטיל אימתי עליהן שלא יעברו על דת שנא' ויעמידם לעד עולם וג'

1. Error for לשבעה. W corrects.

2. Read ובורא with W.

3. W omits.

4. Read צר with W.

5. Abbreviation for מצות סופר: MT has ארני.

6. Dittography: omit with W.

7. Error for עבודת: W corrects.

8. Pointing to make clear שמש is not intended.

1. W H H W D L.
2. W A.
3. Error for W A L A: W corrects.
4. Error for A L A X: W corrects.
5. A L L A X omitted by haplography: W corrects.
6. W A L A.
7. W omits A L A L . . . L A L .
8. W A L A L with MT.
9. Error for A L L A: W [A L L A].

ALL KILGUS ULMIU EXACTIUS UL1, ALL KILGUS CIL ALL  
6' GALE KL TEL ALL GCON UTELL ULICE K4 MELE NM LOULL

ONL ACCL QUARTL

[illegible]

מחא, על קדש מלכות עולמית וזו,  
אלו ארבעה ארבעה עשרה שנים קדש מלכות עולמית  
אלו ארבעה עשרה שנים קדש מלכות עולמית  
לשון עולמית קדש מלכות עולמית, וזו  
לשון עולמית קדש מלכות עולמית, וזו  
לשון עולמית קדש מלכות עולמית, וזו  
לשון עולמית קדש מלכות עולמית, וזו  
לשון עולמית קדש מלכות עולמית, וזו  
לשון עולמית קדש מלכות עולמית, וזו

LOGL KOL! MCH, LXL QLL QLL:

ALLI MEDICELI INIGLO ICILICLO IKAZALO IMIGLO RGOLLO INLXALO  
ECCLLI ZELL MEX, IMEXE LL ZELL E, U; IOLLI ZELL MNGELI  
9. IAN IMULLI QUL XLXN COX ECCLLI ECCEL ICCE,,U IMEXE XLXN

XUU MCH, CL LKX ENGL HLO CLK, LY,  
 LYCL YU GUUU MUX ILLIULL ILLIULL, NU CL YALLO CLAL CLKX  
 S' L"X G"X C"X MUX GUXK ILLIULL ILLIULL MUX ILLIULL YU CL

תחתונים וסדרי תחתונים כנגד סדרי עליונים עד שגמרן<sup>1</sup> מאה ועשרים אלפים עולמות ק"כ אלפים רקיעים ק"כ אדמה שנא' מה גדלו מעשיך וג' ואומ' ומעולם לא שמ' ולא האזינו עין לא ראתה וג' עשה לא נאמר אלא יעשה לבוקר קראן והעמידן בעולם והיו<sup>2</sup> באין ועומדין לפניו שנ' כי כאשר השמים החדשים וג' סליק פירק

6.1 יש"ת על שום שבח מעשיו שהוא עתיד לשית<sup>3</sup> פניו<sup>4</sup> שמים חדשים כפני חמה ופני ארץ חדשה כפני לבנה ופני פרי עצי<sup>5</sup> השדה כפני כוכבים פני פירות אדמה כפני מזלות ומתוקים את<sup>6</sup> ריחם כריח גן עדן וכולן מזומנין לצדיקים לעתיד לבוא שנא' מה רב טובך וג'

2. ד"א שש על שום שהוא עתיד לשית לעולם הבא כל חמה וחמה ושעורה ושעורה שתהא מהן מכל אחת ואחת עשרים ושנים עשרונים של קמח בשני טעינין של חמור<sup>7</sup> וסימנהון בגימטריא חמה:

3. ד"א שש על שום שהוא עתיד לשית לעולם הבא כל ענבה וענבה שתהא לצאת הימנה מכל אחת ואחת קכ"ז גרבין של יין וסימנהון ענבה:

4. ד"א שש על שום שהוא עתיד לשית לעולם הבא כל תאנה ותאנה שתהא תנ"ו לימרין בליטרא של ציפור וסימ' תאנה:

5. ד"א שש על שום שהוא עתיד לשית לעו' הב' כל זית וזית שתהא תי"ז לגין שלשמן יוצאין מכל אחת ואחת וסימ' זית:

6. ד"א שש על שום שהוא עתיד לשית לעולם הבא כל תמר ותמר שתאנה<sup>8</sup> תר"מ צנצנת של שיכר יוצאות<sup>9</sup> מכל אחת ואחת וסימ' תמר:

1. שגמר W.

2. Error for והיו: W corrects.

3. שעתיד לעשות W.

4. Error for פני: W corrects.

5. עץ W.

6. W [את]: read ריחם כריח.

7. W by ditt. חמורים.

8. Error for שתהא: W corrects.

9. יוצאת W.



7. ד"א על שום שהוא עתיד לשית לעו' הב' כל תפוח ותפוח שתהא לצאת מכל אחת ואחת תצ"ר גרבין של תפוח וסימ' תפוח:
8. ד"א שת על שום שהוא עתיד לשית לעו' הב' כל אגוז ואגוז שתהא י"ז עשרונים של מוח לצאת<sup>1</sup> מכל א' וא' וסימ' אגוז:
9. ד"א שת שהוא עתיד<sup>2</sup> כל אילן ואילן שהן<sup>3</sup> פירות לעתיד לבוא שנא' ונתנה הארץ יבולה:
10. דב' אח' שת על שום שהוא עתיד לשית לעתיד לבוא נהרות של יין נהרות נהרות של שמן נה' נה' של דבש נה' נה' של מעדנין נה' נה' של ממתקנים נה' נה' של אפרסמון מהור וכל ההרים מנמפים עסים וכל הגבעות דבש וחלב שנא' והיה ביום ההוא יטפו ההרים עסים וג'
11. וכל כך הללו למה שכרן של צדיקים לעולם הבא שנא' וצדיקים ישמחו<sup>4</sup> ויעלו לפני אלהים ויש' בש' סל' פר'
- מסכתא: מסכתא שטן

- 7.1 ת"ש ר"ק על שום שבח מעשיו שהוא מתש את השמן את<sup>5</sup> כל הבריות ומעמידן בדין ביום דין הגדול לעתיד לבוא
2. רק שהוא מורק חרבו כברק בעולם שנ' אם שנותי ברק וג' זה יום דין הגדול שהוא רוצע<sup>6</sup> כברק בעולם במשפט ידי<sup>7</sup> אשיב נקם לצרי זה השמן ולמשנאי זה סמאל ודוביאל
3. בתחלה מביא הקב"ה את סמאל ואת דוביאל ליום<sup>8</sup> ומעמידן בדין בפני<sup>9</sup> כל באי העו' ואומר להם שומים שבעולם מפני מה

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1. לעשות W.  
 2. ms omits 'לשית לעו' הב'.  
 3. Error for שמהן W: מוציאין.  
 4. W: שמוחו ms agrees with MT.  
 5. Read ואת with W.  
 6. יוצא W.  
 7. Error for ידו: W corrects.  
 8. Insert הדין.  
 9. לפני W.

השמנתם על בני כל אותן השנים בשמרתידום<sup>1</sup> עד שעמדתי  
והחרבתי את ביתי ושרפתי את היכלי והגליתי את בניי שתי פעמים  
לבין אומות העולם וישבתו כל אותן השנים באבל כמי<sup>2</sup> שהוא יושב  
בימי אבלו וימינו לאחורי<sup>3</sup> כל אותן השנים בצער גדול עכשו בואו  
ותנו לי את הדין

4. ועתיד דוביאל להשיב תשובה לפני הגבורה ואומ' לפניו רבון  
של עול' אני מה עשיתי והלא בשעה שהיגלות<sup>4</sup> אותן ביד מלך  
בבל החזרת אותן לפני כל שרי מלכיות שבמרום ולא היה אחד מהם  
שקיבל אותן בסבר פנים יפות אלא אני בלבד ובשעה שחמאו  
קיבלתי מהן את השחר והיצלתיים מן הדין ולא עוד אלא בשובם אל  
ארצם ואל עירם הייתי להן עוזר וסימכתי אותן בבנותם את בית  
המקדש שנא' כה אמר כורש מלך פרס וג'

5. ועתיד סמאל לומר בתשובה לפני הקב"ה ואומ' לפניו רב' של  
עו' אני מה עשיתי והלא עשיתי להן צורכיהן והן עסקו בתורה  
ובמצות ולא עוד אלא שתיקנתי גשרים ומרחצאות וכסף וזהב הרביתי  
בעולם לישא וליתן בהן כל העולם כולו:

6. באותה שעה היה מיכאל עומד מפני דבריו עד שקורא אחריו  
הקב"ה ואומ' לו מיכאל מיכאל מפני מה אתה בורח משיב  
מיכאל ואומ' לפני הק' רבון של עול' מפני דבריו של רשע זה אני  
בורח אמר לו חזור לאחוריך ויחזיר<sup>5</sup> לו בתשובה שהיום אני עתיד  
ליפרע מאיבי בני ואשיב להם נקמה שנ' ונקם ישיב לצרי<sup>6</sup> וג'

7. מיד חוזר מיכאל ועומיד עמו בדין<sup>7</sup> לפני הקב"ה ואומ' לו  
שומה שבעולם כל שעשית לצורך עצמך עשית גשרים שחקנת לא  
תיקנת אלא<sup>8</sup> מהן מכס בכל יום ויום ומרחצאות שעשית לא עשית  
אלא כדי<sup>9</sup> להתעדרן בהן ועתיד הקב"ה שיהא<sup>10</sup> עוזרו בתשובתו

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1. Unintelligible: W מרשעותם.

2. W כמו.

3. לאחוריו W.

4. שהגלית W: שהיגלית Error for.

5. והחזיר W.

6. MT לצריו W emends.

7. לדין W.

8. Insert [כדי ליקח] with W.

9. W omits.

10. W emends to להיות.

ואומר אף הוא לַשִּׁמְאֵל<sup>1</sup> שוטה שבעולם אתה אמר כסף וזהב הרביתי בעולם כסף וזהב ואבנים טובות ומרגליות הכל לי שנא' לי הכסף ולי הזהב וג'

8. מיד גזר עליו הקב"ה גזר דין שגזר שיטילו<sup>2</sup> לתוך גיהנם ומה גזר דין שגזר עליו מלמד שכל רשע ורשע<sup>3</sup> שהקב"ה מרשעתו בדיון עומד מיטטרון שר הפנים וכותיב על מצחו להטילו לתוך גיהנם ואות של גיהנם דיראון שמו שנא' אלה לחיי העולם<sup>4</sup> ואין דיראון אלא גיהנם שנא' והיו דיראון לכל בשר

9. באותה שעה הקב"ה<sup>5</sup> לסמאל ולדוביאל ומוסרן לגבריאל ולמיכאל ואומר להן לכו והטילו אותן לתוך גיהנם מה עשו גבריאל ומיכאל באותה שעה מסרו<sup>6</sup> בשלשלת של אש ומליכין<sup>7</sup> מסוף העולם ועד סופו ומראין<sup>8</sup> קלונם לכל באי העולם<sup>9</sup> וכל אומות העולם רואין אותן ובושין שנא' יראו גוים וג' ואחר כך מוליכין אותן והטילו לתוך גיהנם שנא' ורשעים בחשך ידמו אין חשך אלא גיהנם שנא' יהי דרכם חשך וג'

10. באותה שעה עומד נגרסגיאלי שרה של גיהנם וועפיאל שרה של שאול ואומ' לפני הקב"ה רבון של עול' אין אנו יכולים לקבל את כל הרשעים הללו אמ' להן למה אומ' לפניו רב' של עולם מפני מלאכי השרת מוסת<sup>10</sup> לנו ואש שלהן עושת<sup>11</sup> מלחמה עם אש שלנו אמ' להן הקב"ה אל תיתיראו אני עושה עימהן מלחמה מלמעלה ואתם מלמטה

11. מיד זורק עליהן הקב"ה שלשה חצין מלמעלה שנא' חצי גבור שנונים עם גחלי רתמים: ואין גבור אלא הקב"ה שנא' יוי עזוז

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1. W לסמאל.

2. W שיטלוהו.

3. W omits.

4. MT עולם: W emends.

5. W inserts [נוטל].

6. W אסרן.

7. W מוליכין.

8. W מראה.

9. W עולם.

10. Hoph. ptcp. of הסית W (?) מוכת.

11. W עושות.

וגבור וג' ואין גחלי רתמים אלא גיהנם ושאל שנא' הקומפים מלוח  
וג' סל' פר'

8.1 צ"ף ע"ם שהוא צופה ועושה דין בשמן ומביאו ליום דין ליתן  
את הדין ואומר לו שומה שבעולם ששאל אלפים<sup>1</sup> היית משטין על  
מעשי ידי לפני כל היום בתחלה היית משטין על אדם הראשון וחוה  
עד שטרדתים מגן עדן וקנסתי עליהם מיתה ועל דורות דורותיהן עד  
סוף כל הדורות

2. היית משטין על בני דור המבול לפני עד שהבאתי מבול לעולם  
ואיבדתים מן העולם היית משטין על בני דור הפלגה לפני עד  
שהפצתים משם על פני כל הארץ ובלבתי את לשונם : היית מש'  
על איוב הצדיק לפני עד שהבאתי עליו יסורין ופורענות כל שנים  
עשר חדש היית מש' על בני<sup>2</sup> בית המקדש הראשון עד שמסרתי  
אותן<sup>3</sup> ביד נבוכדנצר מלך בבל והחריב את ביתי ושרף את היכלי  
והגלה את בניי לבין אומות העו' היית מש' על בני בית המקדש  
האחרון עד שמסרתי אותן ביד יונים שעלו והחריבו את בית המקדש  
ושרפו את ההיכל ואת העזרה ואת המזבח באש ונטלו את הכלים  
שבמקדש והרגו את בניי והלכו להן : היית מש' על עשרה זקנים  
חכמים גדולים<sup>4</sup> שבבני עד שמשפתיים<sup>5</sup> ביד מלכי אדום והרגו אותן  
במיתה משונה

3. שנא' ואת הצפוני ארחיק מעליכם וג' ואת הצפוני זה שמן<sup>6</sup>  
שהוא צופה ומביט על בני אדום ועל ידיו נטרדין לגיהנם והדחתיו  
לארץ ציה ושממה זה גיהנם שעתידי הקב"ה להמילו<sup>7</sup> את השמן  
בתוכו את פניו אל הים הקדמוני זה בית המקדש<sup>8</sup> זה בית המקדש  
האחרון שהשמן נתן עיניו בו ונשא<sup>9</sup> שממה ועלה באשו ותעל

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1. Insert [שנה] with W.

2. בניין W.

3. אותו W.

4. גדולים W.

5. Badly written: שמשפתיים in margin. Read שמסרתיים with W.

6. השמן W.

7. להמיל W.

8. Insert with W [הראשון וסופו אל הים האחרון]: omitted by dittography.

9. Read ועשא with W.

1. W K171.
2. W 70A.
3. W 70A.
4. W omits.
5. Read 77 with W.
6. W completes quotation.
7. W 70A1.
8. W 70A1.
9. W omits.
10. W omits, K171 to 0712710. See comm.
11. W 70A1.
12. Error for, K171: W corrects.
13. W 70A171A.
14. Read K170D with W.
15. W 70A.
16. W K170D1.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

MLNG TELUL KZ UCRLO UZRLLEL:

[illegible]



צָרִיו אֵלָא שְׁמֵן וּמִלָּאכִים רַעִים שַׁעְמוּ הַמּוֹרְדִים בּוֹ בַּהֲקִבָּה שְׁנִי<sup>1</sup>  
וּמִשְׁנֵאִיו אָגַף:

11. בַּאוּתָּה שַׁעָה שְׁמֵן בּוֹכָה וּמִלָּאכִים רַעִים שַׁעְמוּ מִפְּנֵי אֵשׁ שֶׁל  
גִּיהֵנָם שְׁנִכּוּ בּוֹ מִלְמָמָה וְהַקֵּב"ה מִשְׁחָק עֲלֵיהֶן מִלְמַעְלָה שְׁנֵא' יוֹשֵׁב  
בְּשָׁמַיִם יִשְׁחָק וּג' בַּאוּתָּה שַׁעָה אִמֵּר<sup>2</sup> הַקֵּב"ה לְשִׁמֵּן לֹא כֹךְ אִמַּרְתָּ  
אֲנִי בִּרְאֵיתִי אֶת גִּיהֵנָם הִרִי אֶתָּה לְגִיהֵנָם וּגִיהֵנָם שֶׁלְךָ מִפְּנֵי מָה אֶתָּה  
בּוֹכָה אֹמֵר' לִפְנֵי רַב' ש' עו' מִפְּנֵי אֵשׁ שֶׁהַשְׁלֵמַת בְּנוֹ שְׂאִין אֲנוּ  
יְכוּלִין לַעֲמֹד בָּהֶן<sup>3</sup>

12. מָה עָשָׂה הַקֵּב"ה בַּאוּתָּה שַׁעָה קִרְאוּ<sup>4</sup> בְּשִׁמוֹתָן וְהַחֲזִירָן  
לְאַחֲזִירָהֶן וְהַשְׁתִּיקָן מִכַּעֲסָן וְהַעֲמִידָן לְצַד אֶחָד<sup>5</sup> וְתִלְהַט עֲלֵיהֶן ז'  
מִיָּנִי אֵשׁ שֶׁל גִּיהֵנָם וְאֵלּוּ הֵן אֵשׁ שֶׁל שְׂאוּל אֵשׁ שֶׁל אֲבִדוֹן אֵשׁ שֶׁל  
בּוֹר אֵשׁ שֶׁל בּוֹר שַׁחַת אֵשׁ שֶׁל טֵיט הַיּוֹן אֵשׁ שֶׁל שַׁעֲרֵי מוֹת אֵשׁ  
שֶׁל שַׁעֲרֵי צַלְמוֹת וְאֵלּוּ שְׁמוֹתָם אֵשׁ גַּחַל<sup>6</sup> אֵשׁ לֵהֵט אֵשׁ לִפִּיד אֵשׁ  
לֵהִבָּה אֵשׁ בּוֹעֶרֶת אֵשׁ קוֹדַחַת אֵשׁ דּוֹלֶקֶת מִסַּכְסַּכְתָּן<sup>7</sup> בְּאוֹר עַד רוֹם  
רָקִיעַ שָׁמַיִם שְׁנֵא' אֵשׁ וּבֶרֶד שֶׁלֵּג וְקִיטּוֹר רוּחַ סַעֲרָה עוֹשֶׂה דְּבָרוֹ:  
סל' פִּיר'

9.1 נ"ם<sup>8</sup> ל"ך שֶׁהוּא אֹמֵר לְשִׁמֵּן נוֹם<sup>9</sup> לך בְּגִיהֵנָם שְׂאִמַּרְתָּ אֲנִי  
בִּרְאֵיתִי בַּעֲצָמַי הִרִי אֵשׁ מֵאֲכַלְךָ וּגִיהֵנָם דִּירַחְךָ שְׁנֵא' יִשׁוּבוּ רַשָּׁעִים  
לְשְׂאוּלָה וּג' אֵל תִּקְרָא יִשׁוּבוּ אֲלֵא יִשׁוּבוּ רַשָּׁעִים בְּשְׂאוּל יִרְדּוּ  
מִכּוֹתָם<sup>10</sup> מִגְּבוּרָתָן מִגְּדוּלָתָן מִקְּמוֹנָתָן<sup>11</sup> מִעוֹשְׁרָן וּמִרְבוּתָן מִעֲנוּגָתָן  
וּמִכְבוֹדָתָן וּמִמִּשְׁלָתָן וּמִמַּלְכוּתָן וְאִין לָהֶם עוֹד סִבְרָא וְתִקּוּמָה בַּעוֹלָם  
הַזֶּה שְׁנֵא' יִתְמוּ חַטָּאִים מִן הָאָרֶץ וּג' אִימַתִּי שֶׁבַחֻ שֶׁל הַקֵּב"ה מְרֻבָּה  
בַּעוֹלָם בּוֹזֵמֵן שִׂיאֲבָדוֹ רַשָּׁעִים מִן הָעוֹלָם שְׁנֵא' וּבִאֲבָד רַשָּׁעִים רְנָה:

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1. in margin. וְכַתּוּבִי מִפְּנֵי צָרִיו.

2. אֹמֵר W.

3. Error for בָּה: W corrects.

4. Error for קִרְאוּ: W corrects.

5. אַחֵר W.

6. גְּדוּל W.

7. Error for מִסַּכְסַּכְתָּן: W corrects.

8. W נ"ם following alphabetical framework; but see commentary.

9. נוֹם W.

10. Error for מִכּוֹתָם: W corrects.

11. מִשְׁמִנִּיתָן W.

2. אמר לו הקב"ה לשמן<sup>1</sup> עכשו מה אתה אומר לפניי<sup>2</sup> רבון של העולם רד ממרום<sup>3</sup> ועמוד אצלנו בתוך גיהנם אם אש שולטת בך ולהבה תבער בך<sup>4</sup> הרי אתה כמוני ואם לאו הרי אתה כמלך ואנו כעבדיך מיד ירד הקב"ה משמי מרום ועומד עימהן שנא' כי<sup>5</sup> יוי באש יבוא וכסופה מרכבותיו וג'

3. באותה שעה עומדין ז' שרים של גיהנם ועפאל שרה של שאול ועמיאל שרה שלה אבדון ועזיאל שרה של בור שחת עקריאל שרה של מיט היון עבדיאל שרה של שערי מות עקלקליאל שרה של שערי של צלמות נגרסגליאל שרה של גיהנם וכולן נופלין על פניהן ומשתחווין לפני הקב"ה ואומר קומה אלהים ויפוצו אויביו וג'

4. כיון שראה שמן שהן עומדין ומשתחווין להקב"ה מיד כועס וחורק את שיניו עליהן שנא' רשע יראה וכעס וג' נתגברו<sup>6</sup> כוחן של אש ונתעברו בהן בשמן וברשעים ושרים של גיהנם מרדפין אותן ומכין אותן במלקות שלש ומורדין אותן מנהרי אש לנהרי ברד מנהרי ברד לנהרי אש ומשליכין אותן לתוך מעמקי<sup>7</sup> והן נופלין ואינן יכולין לעמוד מפני חשך וחלקלקות שנא' יהי דרכם חשך וג'

5. ואומ' לו<sup>8</sup> הקב"ה לשמן עכשו מה אתה אומר שאין אש שולטת בי אומ' לפניו רב' ש' הע' המתין לי<sup>9</sup> שעה אחת עד שאעמוד על רגלי ואנח את דעתי מלפני מלחמתו של אש שאין בי עוד כוח לקבלן ממתינן לו ועומד על רגליו<sup>10</sup> ואומר לו עכשו מה אתה אומר<sup>11</sup> לפניו ר' ש' ע' כל הגבורות הללו אינו משלך מפני שיש לך רשות אחרת מלמעלה מראשך שהיא מצלת אותך מן האש הגדולה הזאת ומן להט ולהבה ולפיר הללו

1. להשמן W.

2. Haplography: insert לפניו with W.

3. ממקומך W.

4. W omits.

5. W inserts הנה with MT.

6. נתגברו W.

7. מעמקים W.

8. W omits.

9. W omits.

10. ועומד על רגליו W omits.

11. Hapl.: insert ואומר with W.



6. מיד נתמלא עליו ועליהן חימה ועבירה וחרון אף והיחס<sup>1</sup> עליהן  
אש ולהטת<sup>2</sup> של גיהנם ונערים כהרים הרים<sup>3</sup> גחלים כגבעות  
לפידין ובולע<sup>4</sup> מלאך המות וכל מלאכי משחית מן העולם שנא' בלע  
המות לנצח ומחה וג'

7. אחר כך טורף שמים וארץ זה על גבי זה והחריב<sup>5</sup> את העולם  
כולו והחזיר<sup>6</sup> לתוהו ובוהו שהיה<sup>7</sup> שנא' שאו לשמים עיניכם וג'  
סל' פיר'

10.1 י"ט ח"ז שהוא יד טוב חוזרת לעולם הבא של עמילי תורה  
של מקימי מצות של נותני צדקה של גומלי חסדים ובשבילן הוא  
ברא את העולם הבא לשלם להן חלק טוב שנא' מה רב טובך וג'

2. לעתיד לבוא יושב הקב"ה על כסא צדקה שנא' ויגבה יי  
צבאות במשפט והאל הקדוש וג' וקורא את כל צדיק וצדיק בשמו  
ונותן לו לכל אחר ואחד חלק שכר טוב לפי מעשיו שנא' ואתם  
תחזקו ואל ירפו ידכם<sup>8</sup> כי יש שכר ל'

3. וכל צד' וצד' נותן מלבוש ישועה לבוש ישועה<sup>9</sup> ומלבישו  
בידי<sup>10</sup> עצמו שנא' כי הלבישני בגדי ישע וג'

4. לכל<sup>11</sup> צדיק וצדיק מתעטפן<sup>12</sup> ממעיל צדקה שלו שנא' שוש  
אשיש ביוי תגל וג'

5. לכל צד' וצד' נותן לו עטרת כבוד מכתרו ומכתירו שנא' והיית  
עטרת תפארת

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1. והחם W.  
2. להמות W.  
3. Dittography: W omits.  
4. ויבולע W.  
5. ומרחיב W.  
6. ומחזיר W.  
7. כשהיה W.  
8. Error for ידיכם: W corrects.  
9. Dittography: omit with W.  
10. W ביד.  
11. W לכל.  
12. Error for מעטפן: W corrects.

S. W. 1877.

The Midrashic literature is now interpreted as Kabbalistic.

4. So MT, but W has ~~01007~~ on the grounds that nowhere else in

3. MT : UCRU LW E.  
snuawa M

2. Error for  $\Delta_{\text{W}}^{\text{W}} \text{W}$ : W corrects.

1. W omits.

[illegible][illegible]

6'    ረዕረ ደረ, ሰደረ, ሰህረ ረፍ ጠዕ። ሀ ለረረ ሀጠሀ ረጠጠ ሰደደ።

8' זעז קל, יקל, מלעב מל און אמלעב, און מעלייט וואס

LEU LEE NAM LOLOL NAM:  
Z' ZCZ FL, RL, LU! ZI OLOLO ULCEUL MZI, ULCEUL MAX,

9' ՀԵՋ ՔԼ, ԽԷԼ, ԱՍԻ ՀԻ ՔԱՆԵ ԱՀԼԸՄ ԱՔԱՆԵ ԱՀԸՄ ՄԶԻ ԴՅՈՒՄ

11.1 ו"ה ד"ג לויתן שהוא מתקן<sup>1</sup> מששת ימי בראשית לעשות סעודה לצדיקין לעולם הבא שנא' ביום ההוא יפקוד ייי בחרבו הקשה:

2. בשעה שהקב"ה מביאו מתוך ים הגדול מאסו<sup>2</sup> עליו ביד שלוחין עד בחכו וישקע<sup>3</sup> בחבל לשוני שנא' תמשך לויתן וג'

3. וכאיזוד מביאו שיגרו הקב"ה לגבריא'ל להביאו מתוך ים הגדול נותן חיים בלחיו<sup>4</sup> ולשוני תשקיע בחבל עבא<sup>5</sup> של שני אלפים פרסאות רוחבו כשיעור ים הגדול שנא' וגויתו כתרשיש וארכו אין חקר ואין מספר

4. ובשעה שהוא ממשכו ומיציאו<sup>6</sup> נתגבר כוחו של לויתן על גבריא'ל ומבליעו עד שהקב"ה עומד עליו בעזרו ומוציאו מתוך ים הגדול של תהום רבה ומביאו לפני הצדיקים ושוחטו בפניהם ביד עצמו שנ' העשו יגש חרבו כיון שרואין צדיקין את הקב"ה שהוא עומד ושוחטו בעצמו מיד פותחין את פיהן ומרננין לפניו שנא' לכו ונרננה ליי וג'

5. ואחר כך שיגרו הקב"ה לגבריא'ל ולמיכאל להביא את שתי בהמות מתוך הררי אלף שנא' בהמות בהררי אלף: באותה שעה הולכין גבריא'ל<sup>7</sup> ומחזירין אחר בהמות וכיון שרואין אותן רצין אחריהן ומבקשין לתפסן ואינן יכולין להן ובורחין מפניהן<sup>8</sup> נתגברו כוחן של בהמות ורצין אחריהן זכר אחר גבריא'ל ונקבה אחר מיכאל וישיגם ורחפן בשמונת עשר אלפים<sup>9</sup>

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1. Read מתוקן with W.

2. Read מאסו, though Piel not attested: cf. W.

3. Read וישקיע: cf. Job 40.25.

4. א' סת ררונך in margin is unintelligible.

5. Error for עבא: W.

6. Error for ומוציאו: W corrects.

7. Insert מיכאל with W.

8. W notes that two pages of the ms are missing here.

9. W omits all text from אלפים to ונתגברו.

11b.1. גוג ומגוג <sup>1</sup> אפרים בכורי תא <sup>2</sup> שב לימיני עד שאכניע חיל מערכות גוג ומגוג אויבך תחת הדום רגליך שנא' נאם יי לאדני שב לימיני וג'

2. וכיצד מלחמות גוג ומגוג מלמד שיבוא משיח על ישראל ויכנים גליותיהן של ישראל לירושלם ובונה את ירושלם שנא' בונה ירושלם

יי נדחי יש' יכנ': וכל מלכי אומות העולם באין לפתחו של משיח ומשמשין לפניו ומביאין לו דרון שנ' בעת ההיא יובל שי ליי וג' ונא' ופתחו שערים <sup>3</sup> וג'

3. וכל אומות העולם באין ומבקשין את בניהן של ישראל במניקות להניק <sup>4</sup> להן אומנים ומניקות שנא' והיו מלכים אומניך וגו' ולא עוד אלא שמחלכים <sup>5</sup> עפר מתחת רגליהן של ישראל ומנשקין אותן כנחש הזה שהוא מלחך עפר בפיו ובלשונו שנא' ילחכו עפר כנחש כזוחלי ארץ וג'

4. וישראל יושבין על אדמתן בטח בארץ ישראל בשלוח והשקט ובשאנן עד ארבעים שנה

5. ואחר מ' שנה יבוא גוג ומגוג על אדמת ישראל ועושה עם משיח ועם ישראל ג' מלחמות בחדש טבת שנא' נאם יי אלהים חדש א' ב' ג' מלחמה אחד בעשרה בטבת ומלחמות <sup>6</sup> אחד בל' בטבת

6. וכאיצד יבוא גוג מארץ המגוג מלמד שמיציר הק' את רוח של גוג ומגוג ומשליט בהן יצר ונכסים וכבוד וכסף וזהב ואבנים טובות ומרגליות רכוש ושלל שבי ושלל שנא' ישבי על טבור הארץ שבא ורדן סוחרי צידון <sup>7</sup> ועד שבע שנים מיתקבצות חילות רבות ועמים רבים שלישים ופרשים ורוכבי סוסים ותופסי מגן וצנה ורומח ומטחי קשת וזרקי חיצים עד אין חקר ועד אין מספר

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1. W omits.

2. W אתה.

3. MT שערך: W emends.

4. W omits.

5. Error for שמלחכים: W corrects.

6. W corrects to מלחמה.

7. MT תרשיש: W emends.

7. ובסוף ז' שנים עולים קהל גדול וחיל רב בסוס וברכב בקשת ובחצים ובצנה ומגן בתראם<sup>1</sup> ורמח לארץ ישראל מירכתי צפון כשואה ומכסין את כל ארץ ישראל ארבע מאות פרסה כענן שיבוא לכסות הארץ שנא' ועלית כשואה וג' ותקפוז להן אלף<sup>2</sup> חמש מאות פרסה ארץ בשעה אחת שנא' כענן לכסות הארץ וג'<sup>3</sup> מה ענן הולך חמש מאות פרסה בשעה אחת אף תקפוז להן את הארץ כדי שיעור שהן מהלכין חמש מאות פרסה בשעה אחת

8. וכיון שמגיעין לארץ ישראל שומעין אומות העולם ועולין עמהן עמים רבים וקהל גדול וכובשין את כל ישראל עשרה ימים ראשונים שוללים שלל רב ובוזזים בז רב גדול ומאספין רכוש ומקנה צאן ובקר גמלים וחמורים סוסים ואתונות שְׁבִי ושבִייה: עשרה ימים האמצעים לוכדין וכובשין ערים וכרכים מדינות ועירות שבארץ ישראל ומאספין כסף וזהב אבנים טובות ומרגליות עד אין חקר ועד אין מספר: עשרה ימים האחרונים באין ויושבין על שערי ירושלם ומגלין חצי עיר ירושלם בגולה שנא' ויצא חצי העיר וג'

9. באותה שעה משיח יוצא מירושלם לעשות עימהן מלחמה וכל הצדיקין כולן עמו קהל גדול ומשיח גוזר עליהן גזירות וימתו מהן אלף אלפים וריבו רבבות באותה שעה שנא' וברוח שפתי ימית רשע:

10. באותה שעה ירד הקב"ה משמי מרום העליונים ומלאכי השרת עימו שנא' ובא יי אלהי וכל קדושי עמו וג'<sup>4</sup> ועושה מלחמות הוא ומלאכי השרת עם גוג ומגוג שנא' ויצא יי ונלחם בגוים וג'

11. וכאיזכר מלחמות גוג ומגוג מלמד שבשש מדות מלחמות עשה הקב"ה עמהן מלחמה ואילוהן בדבר ובדם וגשם שומף ואבני אלגביש ובאש ובגפרית שנא' ונשפמתי אתו בדבר ובדם וג'

12. דבר זה מלאך המות שהשליט על נשמותן באותה שעה שנא' לפניו ילך דבר וג' דם זה שרה שלהן שדומה כדם שהשליך אותו מן השמים שנא' ונחתי מופתים בשמים ובארץ וג' ומנין שהשליך תחלה שרה שלהן מן השמים שנא' והיה ביום ההוא יפקד יי על

1. Unknown: W בתרים.

2. W omits.

3. W omits.

4. MT כל קדושים עמך W emends.

צבא מרום במרום וג' ומנין שאין פקידה אלא גזר דין שנא' יפקד ייי בחרבו וג' וגשם שומף ואבני אלגביש אילו גשמי זעם ומטרות צער שאין העולם יכול לעמוד בפניהן אפילו שעה אחת שנא' הנה סערת ייי חמה וג' ואבני אלגביש אילו אבני שלג ואבני ברד אבני שלג כהרים ואבני<sup>1</sup> ברד כגבעות שהשליך עליהן הקב"ה באותה שעה אותה מג" מלחמות<sup>2</sup> שעשה באבני שלג ובאבני ברד בשעה שנפרע מן המצריים המטיר עליהן אבני שלג ואבני ברד כהרים וגבעות שנא' ויהי ברד ואש מתלקחת וג' ויהו ברד אילו אבני ברד ואש מתלקחת בתוך הברד אילו אבני שלג אבני שלג בגימטריא של"ג פרסאות אבני ברד ר"ו פרסאות

13. וכיון שפרס<sup>3</sup> משה שתי כפיו בתפלה כלפי למעלה<sup>4</sup> מיד ירדו גבריאל מלאך האש וברדיאל מלאך הברד בארבע מאות תשעים וששה אלפים רבבות מלאכי השרת ותופסין את כל אותן אבני שלג ואבני ברד ואינו מניחין<sup>5</sup> אותן להגיע לארץ שנא' מטר לא נתך ארצה: והיו עומדין בין הארץ ובין הרקיע ברוח סופה וברוח סערה ותופסין<sup>6</sup> בידם עד שמגיע ים מלחמתן של כנעניים עד<sup>7</sup> שהקב"ה עושה בהן מלחמה שנא' ויי השליך עליהן<sup>8</sup> גדולות מן השמים וג'

14. באש זו אש של נהר דינור שאין אדם יכול לעמוד בפניה בשלוש מאות אלפים פרסאות בפני חמתה מפני שחמתה קשה יתיר מכל האישים באותה שעה תופים הקב"ה מלא חפניו<sup>9</sup> אש מנהר דינור וזורקן<sup>10</sup> עליהן על גוג ומגוג ועל אגפיו ונהפכות לזיקוקין זיקוקין שני זיקוקי אש נהפכות בהפכות<sup>11</sup> ונזדקקות בכל יחיד ויחיד נכנסת שתיים בחותמו<sup>12</sup> של זה ושתיים בחותמו<sup>13</sup> של זה נשמתן נשרפות וגופן אינו<sup>14</sup> נשרפות מפני שכל חית השדה וכל

1. אבני W.

2. כאותה מלחמה W obscure: מלחמות מג"ה.

3. שהרים W.

4. מעלה W.

5. Error for מניח: W corrects.

6. W inserts אותם .

7. W omits.

8. omitted: W emends. אבנים

9. חפנים W.

10. וזורקו W.

11. Dittography? W omits.

12. Error for בחוטמו: W corrects.

13. Ditto.

14. Error for אינו: W corrects.

עוף השמים מוומנין לאותו היום לאכל את בשרם ולשתות את דמם שנא' ואתה בן אדם כה אמר יי' אלהים אמר לצפור כל וג' ואומר בשר גבורים יאכלו<sup>1</sup> ודם נשיאי הארץ: ואכל' חל' לש' וש' דמם<sup>2</sup> לשברון מז' אש' זב' לכם:

15. ובגפרית זה גפרית מעין משפטן של סדום שנא' גפרית ומלח שרפה וג' מלמד שבשעה ההיא הימטיר עליהן הקב"ה גפרית מן השמים ותתבער<sup>3</sup> בהם אש ושרפו שער ראשם שער בשרם ושער זקנם ושער קניניהם וכל בעלי שער<sup>4</sup> שער סוסיהם שער רכביהם שער מקניהם ושער קניניהן וכל בעלי שער שבהן ז' ימים וז' לילות עד שראו אותן כל העולם כולו ושאלו עליהן ואמרו מה טיבה של אש זו שהוא<sup>5</sup> יוקדת במערב ז' ימים וז' לילות והיו<sup>6</sup> אומרים להן אילו גוג ומגוג שבא<sup>7</sup> על אפרים משיח צדקו של הקב"ה על<sup>8</sup> ישראל עמו לעשות עימהן מלחמה והקב"ה נלחם בעדם והמטיר עליהן אש וגופרית<sup>9</sup> ושרפן<sup>10</sup> נשמתן במקומן שנא' ושלחתי אש במגוג וביושבי האיים לבטח ויד' כי' א' יוי

16. באותה שעה כל העולם כולו היו מתיראים ומודעזעין מפני ששומעין גבורתו וגדולתו של הק' שנא' והתגדלתי והתקדשתי וג' והתגדלתי זה מלחמות ים סוף שנא' וירא ישראל וג' והתקדשתי זו מלחמות<sup>11</sup> סיסרא שנא' מן שמים נלחמו וג' ונודעתי זו מלחמות<sup>12</sup> סנחריב שנא' ויצא מלאך יי' ויכה<sup>13</sup> במחנה אשור וג' וידעו כי אני יוי זו מלחמות גוג שנא' ויצא יי' ונלחם בגוים ההם וג' סל' פיר'

1. MT תאכלו: W emends.

2. MT דם: W emends.

3. W והתבער.

4. W omits שער בעלי שער.

5. Error for שהיא: W corrects.

6. W ויהיו.

7. W שבאו.

8. W ועל.

9. W גפרית.

10. W שרף.

11. W מלחמת.

12. Ditto.

13. MT ויך: W emends.

14. In margin: "ד"ל ע" בגימטריא... ע" בימי גוג ומגוג ג"ו W : אומות... זה בזה לעיני גוים רבים בימי גוג ומגוג, ג"ו W : בגימטריא, רבים ע" אומות

12.1 אחר כך יוצאין יושבי ירושלם ברשותו של משיח כיתות כיתות ואגדות אגדות וחבורות חבורות ושוללים את שולליהם ובוזין את בוזיהן ומאספין בג' חדשים את כל נכסיהן שלהן ואת כל כלי זיין שבהן מגן וצנה קשת וחצים שיריון וקובע כידון ורומח ומקל יד ומכניסין אותן לירושלם וממלאין את ירושלם כרימון מנכנסין<sup>1</sup> של גוג ומגוג

2. ועד שבע שנים ואינן נושלין<sup>2</sup> עצים מן השדות ומן הכרמים ואינן חוטבים מן היערים ומן האגמים ומכל האילנות והרבון<sup>3</sup> כי בנשק יבערו בהן אש: כל יושבי ארץ ישראל שנא' ולא ישאו עצים מן השדה ולא יחטבו מן היערים כי בנשק יבערו אש

3. ועד ז' חדשים כל צפור כנף וכל עוף השמים וכל חית השדה אוכלין את בשרם ושותין את דמם ומלחכין את חלבם עד ששובעין ומשמנין את עצמותיהן עד כדי שלא יוכלו לברוח ולרוץ מפני רוב גבורות שמנם שנא' ואכלתם חלב לשובעה וג' ושבעתם על שולחני סוס<sup>4</sup>

13.1 מלאך<sup>5</sup> ומלאך ומן כל שרף ושרף רוחו ונשמתו ושלמונו ורוח קדשו כדי שייסופו כולן באחד באותה שעה<sup>6</sup> מתולדות השמים ולא מתולדות הארץ ולא ממלאכי השרת ולא מבני בריות שברא הקב"ה בעולם אלא<sup>7</sup> בלבד שנא' ונשגב יי לבדו

2. ומהו לבדו לבדו בלא כסאו בלא כבודו בלא משרתים בלא עבדים בלא פלמין בלא כלום חוץ מן צדיקים שמנשאין הקב"ה על אברתו שנא' באברתו יסך לך וג' ואומ' על כן לא תירא וג'

3. וכשהוא מחדש את עולם הבא מחדש את כסאו את כבודו ואת חופתו ואת מושב יקרו ומעמיד צדיקים בעולם כעין מלאכי השרת ומעלה להן שנא'<sup>8</sup> שש כנפים כמלאכי השרת והיו עומדין מהן מפני כסא הכבוד כמלאכי השרת ומהן עומדין בעולם לעשות רצונו בעולם

1. Error for מנכסים: W corrects.

2. W emends to more common נושלין.

3. Unintelligible: W omits.

4. Page of ms printed in W is missing here: see Commentary.

5. W supplies [ולוקח מן כל] before מלאך.

6. W suggests [ישאר] omitted by haplography.

7. W inserts [הוא].

8. W omits.



הולכין מסוף העולם ועד סופו כעבים וכנשרים ואינן יגיעין רצין  
כזיקוקין וברקים לשמש כבוד קוניהם ואינן יעיפין שנא' וקוי<sup>1</sup> יי  
יחליפו כח יעלו וג' סל' פיר'

14.1 צ"ה פ"ו שהוא עולה ופוקד פוקד ועולה עולה במעלות גבהי  
עולם פוקד לשמים ונבראו שמים חדשים פוקד לארץ ונבראת ארץ  
חדשה

2. וחצב שבעה עמודי צדקה ותלה כל העולם על ראשם כנגד  
שבעה צדיקים שבעולם הזה שעליהן נתיסד העולם ואילוהן אברהם  
יצחק ויעקב משה ואהרן דוד ושלמה

3. וכשם שבשבילן מתקיים את העולם כך בשביל נשותיהן מתקיים  
העולם שנא' קום ריב את העולם<sup>2</sup> וג' אין הרים אלא אבות העולם  
שנא' שמעו הרים את ריב יי וג' ואין גבעות אלא אמהות שרה  
ורבקה רחל ולאה: שנא' ותשמענה הגבעות קולך

4. בזכות אברהם ברא הק' שמים וארץ שנא' אלה תולדות הש'<sup>3</sup>  
אל תקרא בהבראם אלא באברהם שאותיות הללו ואותיות של אברהם  
מכונות כאחד

5. באותה שעה היו שמים וארץ מתרגשין ומתיראין ומזדעזעין א'  
להן הקב"ה מפני מה אתם מתרגשין ומתיראין ומזדעזעין א' לפ' רב'  
ש' ע' אנו יודעין בעצמינו שכבר הרשעים בעולם עתידין להכעיסו<sup>4</sup>  
לפניך ואתה מאביר את העולם בשבילן אנו מה יהא עלינו שלא  
בראת אותנו אילא בשביל בני אדם משיב הקב"ה ואמ' להן אני לא  
בראתי אתכם אלא בשביל אברהם ושרה שנא' ברוך אברם לאל  
עליון באותה שעה היו שמים וארץ וכל סדרי בראשית ששים  
ושמחים ואומ' ברוך אברם לאל ע' וג'

6. בזכות יצחק היה הק' מציל את בני אדם מן מיתה משונה שנא'  
ויצחק בא מבוא וג' ואין באר אלא חיים שנא' באר מים חיים וג'

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1. Error for קוי: W corrects.

2. Error for ההרים: W corrects.

3. Ms omits וג': W completes quotation from Gen.2:4.

4. להכעיס W.



16. בזכות משה מנחיל הקב"ה את עולם הבא לצדיקים שכולו שבת לעתיד לבוא: שנא' לריח שמניך טובים

17. בזכות אהרן מעביר הקב"ה חרון אף מן העולם שנא' ויעמד בין המתים וג'

18. בזכות דויד מנחיל הקב"ה מלוכה וכבוד לצ' לע' לב' שנא' ויהי בישורון וג' היה לא נאמר אלא ויהי שהוא עתיד להיות:

19. בזכות שלמה עתיד הקב"ה לשום שלום בן<sup>1</sup> אש למים בין שלג לגשם בין בריא לבריא<sup>2</sup> בין חיה לחיה שנא' עושה שלום וג' היש מספר

20. כיצד סדר עולם הבא סדר העליונים סדר<sup>3</sup> התחתונים סדר עליונים שלוש מאות סדרים<sup>4</sup> סדר התחתונים שלוש מאות סדרים<sup>5</sup> סדר העליונים כזיו השכינה סדר התחתונים כזיו החמה וכל סדר וסדר של שלשים שלשים אלפים מעונות וכולן דומין כברקי אור ובכל אחד ואחד עומדין שני עמודי אש לכל רוח ורוח וכל עמוד ועמוד שבעים אלפים פרסאות וזיון הולך מסוף העולם ועד סופו כזיו החמה ושכינה וכסא הכבוד

21. ומשרתי אש עומדין בתוך כל אחד ואחד וצדיקי עולם פורחין בכנפיהן ועולין לשם ומתפללין לפני הקב"ה בכל יום ויום שנא' ואליו יתפללין<sup>6</sup> אך כך אל:

22. ומה תפלה שהיו<sup>7</sup> מתפללין לפניו: יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהי שתרחם על עולמך שבחרת וחידשת לידעי שמך ועל רוב טובך

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1. Error for בין: W corrects.

2. W more usual בריה לבריה.

3. W וסדר.

4. W omits.

5. Ditto.

6. Error for יתפללו: W corrects.

7. W שהם.

שצפנת ליראיך שהיו הם תמים<sup>1</sup> מצפים לישעך ומסתכלין בשובתיך ולשמוח עימך ביום שמחתך ולהתענג עליך ביום עינוגתיך אתה רוצה את יראיך לשוב עמהם בשמחתך ולשמוח עליהם בעוז גילתך תעוז ירך החזקה תרום ימינך רוממה תגמול חסד ליודעי חסדיך ברוך אתה יי רוצה מיחלים

23. מיד נענה הקב"ה מתוך חופת כבודו ואמ' להן בני אל תצערו את עצמכם שעד שלא התפללתם לפני כבר קבלתי את תפלתכם ועד עכשו היה לי ולכם צערה<sup>2</sup> ובושה בעולם מיכן ואילך אין לי ולכם אלא שמחה ושבון צהלה ורנה גילה ועינוגה שנא' וענוים יירשו ארץ וג' ואו' וצדיקים ישמחו וג'

24. ומנין שכשהיה צרה לצדיקים בעולם הזה הקב"ה עמהם בצרה שנא' עמו אנכי בצרה וג' ומהו עמו אנכי בצרה מלמד שאמ' הקב"ה עמו אנכי שרוי בעולם הזה אחלצהו בעולם הזה ואכבדהו בימות המשיח ארך ימים אש' בתוך גן עדן ואראהו בישועתי לעולם הבא

25. ומנין שכשהיה שמחה לצדיקים לע' לב' <sup>3</sup> הק' שש ושמח עמהן שנא' ישמח יי במעשיו ואין מעשיו של הקב"ה אלא צדיקים בלבד שהכל בטלים ומבטלין והולכין מן העולם ואינן חוזרין אלא צדיקים בלבד בני עולם הבא שהן נוחלין חיי העולם הבא שנא' אמרו צדיק כי<sup>4</sup> מלמד שא' להן הקב"ה לנביאים לכו בשרו ואמרו לכל צדיק וצדיק שטוב לפני לבריותי פרי מעלליכם<sup>5</sup> איכלו<sup>6</sup> בעולם הזה והקרוני אני אקיים לכם לעולם הבא: שנא' והתענג על יי

26. ומנין ששמים וארץ הולכין מן העולם ושוב אינן חוזרין שנא' שאו לשמים עיניכם וג'

1. Error for תמים: W corrects.

2. W more common צער.

3. W omits.

4. 'ג omitted: W completes quotation from Is.3:10.

5. Read מעלליהם with W.

6. Error for יאכלו: W corrects.

27. ומנין שהרים<sup>1</sup> והיבשה הולכין מן העולם שנא' ויושביה כמו  
כת'<sup>2</sup>

28. ומנין שאף הרים וגבעות הולכין מן העולם ואינן חוזרין שנא'  
כי ההרים ימושו וג'

29. ומנין שאף חמה ולבנה כוכבים וכל מזלות הולכין ואינן חוזרין  
שנא' כל צבאם יבול וג'

30. ומנין שאף מלאכי השרת ובריות וכל הנשמות הולכין ואינן  
חוזרין שנא' וכל צבאם וכל צבאם מלמד שכל צבא השמים וכל  
צבא הארץ הולכין מן העולם ואינן חוזרין לעולם הבא אלא צדיקים  
בלבד שנא' וישועתי לעתיד<sup>3</sup>

31. ומנין שהצדיקים בני עולם הבא כשחוזרין לעולם הבא שוב  
אינן מיתים ואינן הולכין מן העולם הבא לעולם ולעולמי עולמים:  
שנא' כי כאשר השמים החדשים וג' מה שמים וארץ של עולם הבא  
חיים וקיימים לעולם ולעולמי עולמים כך צדיקים בני עולם הבא  
חיים וקיימים לעולם ולעולמי עולמים:

32. כאיזכר שכל צד' וצד' לעולם הבא עתיד לחיות אלה שנים  
ולא כהתה עיניהם מליאות<sup>4</sup> כימי נערוותם ולא נס מבשרם ומעצמם  
לחה ידי שנות ולאחר אלה שנים עתיד להעלות להם נובים<sup>5</sup> ודדים  
כקנונים<sup>6</sup> אחד האנשים ואחד הנשים וכל אחד ואחד מהן נולדים להן  
סימני נערוות וחוזרין כולן לימי נערוותן שנא' וקווי יי יחליפו כח  
ואומ' עוד ינובון בשיבה<sup>7</sup> היו לא נאמר כן<sup>8</sup> אלא יהיו שהן עתידין  
לחזור לימי נערוותן ואם תמיה אתה על הדבר בוא והסרכל באברהם  
ושרה<sup>9</sup> אחורי<sup>10</sup> בלוחי היתה וכת' ותאמר מי מלל אף צדיקים

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1. Error for הים: W corrects.

2. MT כן: W emends.

3. W לעולם תהיה: cf. Is.51:6.

4. Error for מלראות: W corrects.

5. W גופים: see Comm.

6. W כקמנים: see Comm.

7. W continues quotation from Ps.92:14.

8. W omits.

9. W inserts 'שנ'.

10. Error for אחרי: W corrects.

לעולם הבא כך מפני שהן רואין פני השכינה ושובעין מזיו הגבורה

33. וכל כך הללו למה אינו אלא מן הקב"ה שאף כך בכל יום ויום שנא' כי ישר ייי צורי וג' ואלף שנים בעיניו של הקב"ה יום אחד שנא' כי אלף שנים בעיניך כיום אתמול: סל' פיר'

15.1. צ"ז ק"ח צ"ז שהוא צץ וזו ממקום כבודו לעולם הבא ויושב בישיבתו של מעלה כחכם הגדול שחכמתו מלא עולם ותבונתו אין קץ ואין מספר שנא' גדול אדונינו וג'

2. וכל צדיקין<sup>1</sup> עולם הבא פורחין בכנפיהן ויושבין במדרש לפני כסא הכבוד ובית מדרשו של הקב"ה במרום שם"ה אלפים רבבות שנה בא' שע' והיה<sup>2</sup> משה עומד עליו<sup>3</sup> תורגמן לפני הקב"ה והיה<sup>4</sup> קולן<sup>5</sup> הולך מסוף העולם ועד סופו שכינה על כסא הכבוד מימין ומשה משמאלו ושני עמודי אש מימיו ושני עמודי להבה משמאלו

3. ומנין שהיה<sup>6</sup> משה עומד עליו תורגמן שנא' ואנכי עומד וג' עמדתי לא נאמר כן<sup>7</sup> אלא אנכי עומד מלמד שבאותה שעה הכרוז יוצא מלפני הקב"ה ואומ' בי<sup>8</sup> בכם שהוא רוצה לעמוד לפני תורגמן שנא' את מי יורה דעה משיבין צדיקין וא' מי שהיה הוא שיהיה מי שהיה תרגמן בהר סיני שנא' ואתה פה עמד אף עכשו הוא יהיה תרגמן משה בשמועות וזרובבל בהגדות שנא' ביום ההוא אקחך וג'

4. והיה הקב"ה דורש את התורה בפני כל הצדיקים בשבעים לשון וכל לשון לארבעה<sup>9</sup> מאות תשעים וששה אלפים רבבות פנים ועל כל פנים ופנים אומ' עליו מאה ועשרים אלפים רבבות טעמים של טעמים מאה ועשרים אלפים רבבות טעמים<sup>10</sup> של אחר<sup>11</sup> שנא' אני ייי דובר צדק וג' והיה<sup>12</sup> מאיר עיניהן של צדיקים במאור תורה

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1. Error for צדיקי: W corrects.

2. W omits three times in this section, converting tense to present.

3. W omits.

4. W omits.

5. Error for קולו: W corrects.

6. W omits.

7. W omits.

8. Error for מי: W corrects.

9. Error for ארבע: W corrects.

10. Dittography: omit של...טעמים.

11. W omits.

12. W omits.

6. Error for  $\Delta_{\text{LCL}}$ : W corrects.

S. W omits.

• **புது**

4. 057, 058, 059, 060, 061, 062, 063, 064, 065, 066, 067, 068, 069, 070, 071, 072, 073, 074, 075, 076, 077, 078, 079, 080, 081, 082, 083, 084, 085, 086, 087, 088, 089, 090, 091, 092, 093, 094, 095, 096, 097, 098, 099, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 8

3. Insert 172 with W.

2. M. omits "and reads" M. 2.

I. W. 025.

1. התאמה בין המדיניות של הממשלה לבין המציאות של החברה,  
 2. התאמה בין המדיניות של הממשלה לבין המדיניות של המדינות האחרות,

CLC 11740 12,

21. XOLUL 4CO KMI 4. OMCI CL MUICI 4COI LLM4O MEX,

ממשל גרמני מלפני מלחמה, כל עוד לא נא

[illegible]

דעם אדאס. ערזע זאגט, דאס איז א גוטע זאך, און

01. NQULU 4CO KML NU<sub>5</sub> UGOU 4N NQ, 4C, N4N 4Q, M4N 4M4Q

Եւ, զիւն տէրս լի լի, զի ՀԵՄԼՈՎ ՔԱՌ ԵՐԵՄԱ ՁԵՄԸ

לְהוֹדוֹת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְלִשְׁמֹחַ בְּעֲבוּרֵנוּ מִן הַיָּם הַזֶּה

6. አርሲ ረብ አርሲ ወጪ ረዳ ለጋ, ረብ, ምህር ረዳዎ አገራዊ ምር,

ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏԱՆԻ ՄԱՐԶ

8' XOLU, LCO MTLU MTLUL, LA XO, LC, XLX LUL, CL MULL

MCN, LLLC LNCOL

43, 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000 1001 1002 1003 1004 1005 1006 1007 1008 1009 1010 1011 1012 1013 1014 1015 1016 1017 1018 1019 1020 1021 1022 1023 1024 1025 1026 1027 1028 1029 1030 1031 1032 1033 1034 1035 1036 1037 1038 1039 1040 1041 1042 1043 1044 1045 1046 1047 1048 1049 1050 1051 1052 1053 1054 1055 1056 1057 1058 1059 1060 1061 1062 1063 10

2. KOLUO LCO MALI KALU KAMI KLUL KALZLU MOLI KAN KA,

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

9. KOLU, ZCO, KAN ZWICCO CL. MUCIA ULLI UEL, KUCO

מלך

מאמל זא וועל זעס נאך זעלענעם על מועל וועלמ זי אל!

[illegible]

S' 1000 000 000 000 000, 200 000 000 000 000, 100 000 000 000 000

GDLE 11 1710 12.

מח, וזהו כלל המצוות והם כלל, כלל, וזהו, מח,





זו ברכת המזון וברכת הפירות ואם תעשה כך עליך הכתוב מקיים  
והסירתי מחלה מקרבך: סל' פיר'1

22. באותה שעה אומרין צדיקין לפני הקב"ה רבון של עולמים<sup>2</sup>  
מפני מה לאומות העולם היתרת את העריות ולנו אסרת את העריות<sup>3</sup>  
משיב הקב"ה ואומ' להן מפני שהחזרתי עליהן את התורה ולא  
קיבלוה כיון שראיתי שלא קיבלו את התורה ולא ניתקמו<sup>4</sup> את  
המצות העמדתי מהם שבעה נביאים עליהן עידיהם להרשיעם בדינה  
של גיהנם ואילוהן שבעה נביאים עידיהם נאמנים אליפו התימני  
ובלבד<sup>5</sup> השוחי וצופר הנעמתי ואליהוא בן ברכיאל הבווי ואיוב  
ויתרו ובלעם ויש אומ' בלעם ואביו

23. ואחר כך התרתי להן את העריות וחובשתי אותם בסוסים  
ובחמורים<sup>6</sup> שאינן באין לחיי עולם הבא שנא' אשר בשר חמורים  
בשרם וזרמ' סוס' זרמ': ומסרתים<sup>7</sup> לגיהנם ביום דין הגדול להיות  
הם מאכל לגיהנם כעצים שנותנין מאכל לאישים שנא' כי תולעתם  
לא תמות וג'

24. ומניין שהקב"ה התיר להן את העריות שנא' עמד וימודד וג' מהו  
ויתר גוים מלמד שכשראה הקב"ה את אומות העולם שלא יקבלו את  
התורה ולא יקימו את המצות היתיר להן את כל העריות שבחורה  
ומסרן לנגרסגיא'ל שרה של גיהנם וא' לו כל הבריות הללו יהו  
בפתקי שלך חוץ מאומה זו שקיבלו את התורה שלא יהא<sup>8</sup> בפתקי  
שליך שנא' הכל בכתב וג' משיב נגרסגיא'ל ואמ' ר' ש' ע' אי זו  
היא שלא יהא בפתקו<sup>9</sup> שלי ואין לי עסק בה א' לו זו אומה שלי  
שנא' לא כאלה ומהו לא כאלה מלמד שא' לו הקב"ה לנגרסגיא'ל לא  
כאלה אומות העו' שהן יורשין לגיהנם על שלא קיבלו את התורה  
ולא קיימו את המצות כל חלקתי חלק יעקב וישראל שהן קיבלו את  
התורה וקימו את המצות שתיקנתו<sup>10</sup> להן גן עדן וכל מעדניה וכל

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1. This does not appear to be the end of a chapter: W omits.

2. W רבש"ע.

3. W omits את העריות.

4. W corrects to יקיימו.

5. Error for ובלבד: W corrects.

6. Error for כס' וכח': W corrects.

7. W ומכרתים.

8. W יהו plural.

9. Read בפתק with W.

10. Error for שתיקנתי: W corrects.

טובות העולם הבא שנא' המיבה יי למובים ואין טובים אלא  
ישראל שנא' טובים דודך מין:

25. מהו כי יוצר הכל הוא מלמד שלא יוצר<sup>1</sup> הקב"ה את כל העולם  
אלא בשביל ישראל שנא' תולה ארץ על בלימה ומהו על בלי' מלמד  
שאין העולם כולו קיים אלא על מי שהוא משים את עצמו בלא  
כלום ואי זה הוא אומה שהיא משימה את עצמה בלא כלום היי אימר<sup>2</sup>  
זה ישראל שנא' עם זו יצרתי וג' מה א' אברהם אנכי עפר ואפר מה  
א' משה ואהרן ונחנו מה מה א' דוד ואנכי תולעת ולא איש וג' ומה  
א' שלמה כי בער<sup>3</sup> ואין איש אלא משה שנא' גם האיש<sup>4</sup> ואין אדם  
אלא אדם הראשון שנא' ויברך אותם ויקרא את שמם אדם: א'  
שלמה אני שכת' בו ויחכם מכל האדם בער אנכי מאיש ממה  
שנקרא איש היה לי שאיסתכל<sup>5</sup> בו במשה שכתב בחורה ולא ירבה  
לו נשים ולא ירבה לו סוסים וכסף וזהב לא וג' ועברתי על שלשתן

26. מנין שעבר שלמה על לא ירבה לו<sup>6</sup> שנא' ויהי לשלמה שלש  
מאות נשים ומנין שעבר על לא ירבה לו סוסים שנא' ויהי לשלמה  
ארבעים אלף<sup>7</sup> סוסים ומנין<sup>8</sup> על לא ירבה לו כסף וזהב שנא' אין  
כסף נחשב וג' מהו<sup>9</sup> לא בינת אדם לו: <sup>10</sup> אמ' שלמה היה לי  
שאיסתכל<sup>11</sup> באדם הראשון שהכל נברא בכפו שאלמלא<sup>12</sup> ורום  
גבהו מן הארץ ועד הרקיע ושתי גלגלי עיניו כשתי גלגלי החמה  
והיה לו כוח וגבורה כגיבורי עליונים ולא נשא אלא אשה אחת ועל  
ידיה גרמה מיתה לו ולדורותיו ולדורות דורותיו עד סוף כל הדורות  
שנא' כי עפר אתה וג' וכל דורות העולם מנין שנא' וישוב<sup>13</sup> העפר  
על הארץ: ולמה נשא שלמה אלף נשים אלא שאמר כדי שיהיו לי<sup>14</sup>

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1. יצר W.

2. Error for אומר: W corrects.

3. 'וג' omitted: W continues quotation from Prov.30:2.

4. Ditto: Ex.11:3.

5. להסתכל W.

6. נשים omitted: W inserts.

7. MT ארות omitted: W inserts.

8. Add שעבר with W.

9. ומהו W.

10. Read לי with W.

11. להסתכל W.

12. Unintelligible: W omits.

13. MT וישב: W emends.

14. Read לו with W.

אלף בנים בשנה מכל אחד ואחד<sup>1</sup> בעשרים שנים עשרים אלפים  
בנים שלא יהו כל בריא<sup>2</sup> וכל בשר ודם יכולין לשלש בי ולעשות  
לי כל דבר אמ' לו הקב"ה שלמה בני אתה נוטלת<sup>3</sup> אלף נשים כדי  
שיהיו לך אלף בנים בשנה אני נותן לך בן אחד שאין לו אלא חצי  
גוף ובן שלמה רחבעם וג'

27. שוב אמ' להן הק' לצדיקים צדיקים<sup>4</sup> אתם אומ' לי לנו אסרת  
את העריות אין לי כל דבר ודבר שאסרתי לכם בדברי תורה שלא  
התרתי לכם מעין כיוצא בו

28. אסרתי לכם את הארוסות התרתי לכם את הנשואות אסרתי לכם  
אשת איש התרתי לכם את האלמנה אסרתי לכם בת התרתי בת אחות  
אסרתי לכם בת אח<sup>5</sup> התרתי לכם אשה ואחותה בזמן שאינה היא  
בחייה אסר' לכם בת בת הת' לכם בת בת של אחות אסר' לכם דם  
הנדה הת' לכם דם בתולים אסר' לכם את הזנות<sup>6</sup> הת' לכם האנוסות  
אסר' לכם את הגויה הת' לכם את השחרורה אס' לכם אשה נדה  
התר' לכם היה<sup>7</sup> בת שמונה ימים אסר' לכם דם הת' לכם הכבד אסר'  
לכם גיר הנשה התר' לכם המחול אסר' לכם את חלב שעל הכליות  
התר' לכם חלב שעל האליה אסר' לכם בשר בחלב התר' לכם בשר  
דגים בחלב אסר' לכם בהמה כשהיא מיתה התר' לכם דג כשהוא מת  
אסר' לכם את הגידים התר' לכם את הכוחל<sup>8</sup> בת חלבים אס' לכ'  
בשר סוסים הת' לכם קרב השור אס' לכ' חלב שבבהמה הת' לכ'  
חלב שבצבי ושבאיל אס' לכ' נבילות ומריפות הת' לכם כמחין  
ופשריות

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1. Error for אחת ואחת: W corrects.

2. W בריה.

3. Error for נוטל: W corrects.

4. Dittography: W omits.

5. Read אחות אשה with W.

6. הזונות W.

7. Error for היתה: W corrects.

8. Read הכחול with W.

29. המשלתי אתכם בקדושי עליונים וקראתי אתכם בני עליונים  
שנא' אני אמרתי אלהים<sup>1</sup>

30. משיבין צדיקים ואומ' לפניו ר' ש' ע' יפה פעלת יפה פקדת  
יפה דברת יפ' דרשת יפ' פרשת יפ' ביארת יפ' אסרת יפ' התרת וכל  
אורחותיך חסד ואמת

31. שנא' כל אורחות יי חסד ואמת לנוצרי וג' נוצרי בריחו אילו  
אברהם יצ' ויע' שנוצריין בריחו של הק' שנ' אל דבר<sup>2</sup> ואומ' וימל  
אברהם וג' ועידותיו אילו יוסף וכל הנביאים וכל החסידים<sup>3</sup> שנא'  
עידות ביהוסף וכל<sup>4</sup> מנין<sup>5</sup> שנא' אלה העדות וכל החסידים<sup>6</sup> מנין  
שנא' אז דברת בחזון ואין חזון אלא נבואה שנא' חזון ישעיהו וג'

32. ואין חסידים אלא צדיקים הראשונים שנא' יעלו חסידים  
בכבוד שהן נוחלין כבוד וגדולה בעולם הזה ולעולם הבא בעולם  
הזה מנין שנא' כבוד חכמים ינחלו וג' ולעולם הבא מנין שנא' וכסא  
כבוד ינחילם ותאמר שויתי עזר אין עזר אלא תורה שנא' האם אין  
עזרתי וג' ואין

גיבור אילא הקב"ה שנא' יי עזוז וגבור הרימותי בחור מעם ואין  
בחור אלא משה שנא' לולי משה בחירי<sup>7</sup> וג'

33. מהו עמד בפרץ מלמד שבשעה שעשו ישראל את העגל עמד  
משה בתפלה ותחנונים לפני הקב"ה והיה פרקלט גדול עליהן<sup>8</sup> על  
ישראל לפני אביהן שבשמים והיה מבקש עליהן רחמים בכל רוח  
ורוח שבעולם במערב במזרח בצפון ובדרום ומשיב חמתו וכעסו של  
הקב"ה מעל ישראל שנא' וינחם יי על הרעה אשר דבר לעשות  
לעמו: סל' פר'

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1. Omitted: W completes quotation from Ps.80:6.

2. Unidentified quotation: W omits.

3. Insert : יוסף מנין : cf. W.

4. Insert :החסידים :cf.W.

5. Omit with W.

6. Error for :הנביאים : W corrects.

7. MT בחירו : W corrects.

8. W omits.

16.1 ק'ח שהוא עתיד ליקח את כסא הכבוד ממקומו לעולם הבא ומביא מתחתיו אלף אלפים ריבו<sup>1</sup> רבבות את<sup>2</sup> כל הנשמות של עוברים שהן מיתין במעי אימן בעון אבותם ואמותם<sup>3</sup>

2. והיה<sup>4</sup> מראה להן לצדיקים ואומ' להן בניי רצונכם שתחינה הנשמות של הללו משיבין צדיקים וא' לפ' רב' ש' מה הן הללו אומ' להן הללו נשמות של עוברים שמיתו בעון אבותם ולא באו לעולם<sup>5</sup>

3. משיבין צדיקים ואומ' לפ' רב' של<sup>6</sup> בעון מיהן מתו או' להן בעון אבותם ואמותם ומנין שבעון אב ואם עוברים מתים שנא' אף בעונות וג' משיבין צד' וא' לפ' רב' ש' ע' לא כך הכתבה בתורה לא ימותו אבות וג' משיב הקב"ה ואומ' להן<sup>7</sup> אני לא הכתבתי אלא בנים אבל עוברים לא מפני שהן דומין למים ואין עוברים נקראו<sup>8</sup> בנים אלא עד שיוצאין ממעי אימן שנא' כי ילדתי בן לפיכך אין אביו מתאבל עליו אלא עד<sup>9</sup> שלשים יום ועוד הכתבתי על ידי משה עבדי ברוך פרי בשנך אמתי פרי הבטן מתברך בזמן שאביו ואמו עושין רצונו בעולם שנא' אל תחן<sup>10</sup> לחטיא וג' ואין מעשי ידיו אלא בנים ובנות שנא' כי בראותו ילדיו

4. משיבין צדיקים וא' לפ' רב' ש' ע' רצונך אתה תרחם עליהן בעבור שמך הגדול ותעלה עליהן עצמות וגידים ובשר ותעמידם על רגליהן מיד שמע מהן הקב"ה וא' להן אני למעני אעשה להם לא למען אבותם ואמותם שנא' למעני למעני וג'

5. מה עושה הקב"ה באותה שעה דובר דברו עליהן והעלה בשר וגידים ועצמות ומוח ועור עליהן וחיון ומעמידן על רגליהן<sup>11</sup> שנא'

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1. Error for ריבי: W corrects.

2. W omits.

3. W אמם.

4. W omits.

5. W omits משיבין to לעולם by haplography.

6. רבש"ע omitted: W ע'.

7. ואומ' להן W omits.

8. נקראים W.

9. Read [שיחיה] with W.

10. אמת פירך omitted: W inserts.

11. רגליהן... מיד שמע W omits.

1. Unknown bibl. quotation: W substitutes [פנש גר] from Ps.89:37.
2. Read מרמלך with W.
3. Ditto.
4. Error: W omits.
5. Error for מרמלך: W corrects.
6. W omits.
7. 'ג omitted: W continues quotation.
8. Error for מרמלך: W corrects.
9. Error for מרמלך: W corrects.

1. W. ארואר.
2. W. רב.
3. W. omits all from 1712 to 1713: see Commentary.
4. W. omits 1712.
5. Read 1712 with W.
6. 171 omitted: W completes quotation.
7. W. ארואר.
8. Error for 1712: W corrects.
9. W. 171: see below.

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יצר הרע ובלא מלאך המות בלא פחד ובלא רעדה בלא ריב בלא משפט בלא בכי בלא זעקה בלא מלחמה בלא מחלוקת כי בכל העולם כולו שלום שנא' וענוים ירשו ארץ וג'

6. 'סעודה ומשתה מנין שנא' יאכלו ענוים וג' ואין לעד אלא עולם הבא שנא' סמוכים לעד לע' שמחה ויום טוב מנין שנא' וצדיקים ישמחו וג' רינה והודאה מנין שנא' רננו צדיקים וג' גילה מנין שנא' יגל יעקב וג' רנן וצהלה מנין שנא' כה אמר יי רנו וג' תהלה מנין שנא' ויברכו שם כבודך וג' השקט ובטח מנין שנא' וישב עמי בנוה שלום וג' חיים בלא צער מנין שנא' ויהיו חיים לנפשך וג' ימים טובים בלא יגון מנין שנא' ששון ושמחה<sup>1</sup> ושנים רבות בלא צרה מנין שנא' והסירתי את לב האבן<sup>2</sup> זה יצר הרע שנקרא אבן שנא' כובד אבן ונטל בלא מלאך המות מנין שנא' בלע המות לנצח וג'<sup>3</sup> פחד ורעדה מנין שנא' אין פחד אלהים וג' בלא ריב וזעקה מנין שנא' ולא ישמע בה וג' בלא מלחמה ומחלוקת מנין שנא' וקשת וחרב<sup>4</sup> כי כל בני עולם הבא כולו שלום מנין שנא' ונחתי שלום בארץ: סל' פר'

7. 'שוב או' צדיקים לפני הקב"ה רב' ש' ע' ידענו כי גיבור מלא גבורות אתה עיזוז וחזק מלא כל תושבחות אתה ואין יגיעה לפיכך<sup>5</sup> לא במעשי<sup>6</sup> בראשית שבראת<sup>7</sup> ולא במעשי<sup>8</sup> אחרית שחידשת ואין לפניך נלאה בירידה ובעליה כי כל באומר עשית ברוח פה ובציווי פסת<sup>9</sup> ותלית עולם כאור נגה מילאת כולן רוב מיני מעדנים הימתקתה בושם ואפרסמון מהור הרביתה שבח במרום ועומק הגדלת נוגה בעלייה ותחת היראת מכבודך יסודי מעלה ומטה עכשו רצונך שתחד כסא הכבוד למטה לארץ לדרוש לפנינו בישיבה דברים שלא שמעו אוזן מעולם שנא' מעולם<sup>10</sup>

8. 'מישיב הק' וא' להן צדיקי עולם חסידיו אלהינו גיבורי תורה

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1. 'omitted: W completes quotation from Is.35:10.
  2. 'omitted: W continues quotation from Ez.36:26.
  3. 'omitted: W inserts.
  4. 'omitted: W continues quotation from Hos.2:20.
  5. Error for לפניך: W corrects
  6. W במעשה.
  7. W omits.
  8. W במעשה.
  9. W omits.
  10. 'omitted: W continues quotation.



רודפי צדקות גדולי חכמה שבכל דור ודור וכי אין בידי ספוק לעשות כסא חדש מרכבה וגלגל חופה וכבוד עמודי אש ענני ברק עבי קל ושליחי רוח חשמלי זוהר וגם משרתי להם<sup>1</sup> לשמש כבודי מלמטה כדרך שמשמשין מלמעלה לעשות לכם כרצונכם בתוכה כשם שעשיתם רצוני מימי עולם ולהנחיל לכם חלק שכר טוב בחיי עולם הבא חדש יש לי אוצרות הרבה שנא' להנחיל אוהבי יש וג' מהו<sup>2</sup> ואוצרותיהם מלמד שכל צדיק וצדיק עתיד לנחול לעולם הבא מלפני הקב"ה אלף ומאתים עשרים ושמונה אוצרות טובות שכל אחד ואחד מליאות משובו וממעדני<sup>3</sup> של עולם הבא וסימנהון בגימטריא אוצרותיהם

9. מה עושה הקב"ה בא' שע' עומד מכסא הכבוד ומנחיל את כסאו ואת כבודו ואת כתרו ואת שרביטו ואת לבוש הודו ואת מעיל הדרו ואת זבד זוהרו ואת זיו שכינתו את סוסו ואת רוכבו ואת שליחו עמו ואת מלכותו ואת מרכבתו ואת משרתו ואת כבודו שבמרום רומים לכל צדיק וצדיק לעולם הבא

10. שנא' מקים מעפר דל מקים מעפר דל<sup>4</sup> זה יום תחית המתים שמקים הק' מן העפר את כל הצדיקים שנקראו דלים שנא' ואת עם עני וג' ועני ודל לשון אחד הוא ומפני מה נקראו שמם דלים ועניים בעולם הזה ועשירים ונכבדים לעולם הבא מאשפות ירים אביון שמירים הק' קרנם בכבוד מן הארץ ועד רום רקיע להושיבי<sup>5</sup> עם נדיבים שמושיבין<sup>6</sup> הק' לפני כסא הכבוד כמו כן מלכים שנקראו נדיבים שנא' נדיבי עמים נאספו

11. וכסא כבוד ינחילם שמנחיל הקב"ה להן כל המדות<sup>7</sup> כסא הכבוד שבמרום כי ליי מצוקי זו עולם הבא וישת עליהם תבל זו ארץ ישראל שנקראת תבל שנא' לך שמים<sup>8</sup>

1. Error for להט?

2. W omits.

3. Error for וממעדנים: W corrects.

4. W omits דל מעפר.

5. Error for להושיב: W corrects.

6. Error for שמושיבין: W corrects.

7. Read חמדות; cf Hag.2:7.

8. 'וג' omitted: W continues quotation from Ps.89:12.

12. אף כך בורא כסאו<sup>1</sup> חדשה וכבודו חדשה<sup>2</sup> מרכבתו חדשה וסוסו חדשה<sup>3</sup> וגלגליו חד' מענו חד' והיכלו חד' מזבחו חד' משוכנו<sup>4</sup> חד' משרתו חד' ומשמשיו חדש' וענני אש חד' וענני להבה חד' וזיקוקי<sup>5</sup> ובר' חד' וגדולו חד' תמים<sup>6</sup> חד'

13. ויורד בכבוד גדול מן השמים ברוב זיו זוהר תואר חימר אור ומאור להקביל פניהן של צדיקים לעולם הבא כאב שהוא מקבל פני בן בכורו בכול יום שנא' אני בצדק וג' ומהו אשבעה וג' מלמד שהקב"ה משגיר אלף<sup>7</sup> אלפי אלפים ורוב ריבו רבבות זיקוקי זיו זיקוקי בזק זיקוקי זוהר תואר אור השכינה מזיו שכינתו של הקב"ה שנים שנים לכל צדיק וצדיק אחד ואחד לכל עין ועין בשבילו<sup>8</sup> שהן מקיצין את שנתן בעולם הזה והיו<sup>9</sup> יושבין ועסיקין<sup>10</sup> בדברי תורה והיו<sup>11</sup> כולן ששים לפני כסא הכבוד ושמחים לפני הקב"ה על אותה שעה א' דויד שובע שמחות את פניך

14. באותה שעה כל הצדיקים כולן מתגברין זיו אור של עיניהן כגלגל החמה ורואין מסוף העולם ועד סופו בראיה אחת ולא כהתה עיניהן מלראות בלילה כמו היום ובין בלילה<sup>12</sup> אבל חמה ולבנה כוכבים וכל מזלות אף על פי שהן משתמשין בזיו השכינה ביום ובלילה בעולם הזה שאומ' העולם עובדין להן ומשתחווין ומשמשין לפנין בזבח ומנחה בבסמים וקמרת נשתנו זיו אורו<sup>13</sup> בין ביום בין בלילה חמה אין של סוכו<sup>14</sup> בלילה אלא ביום וכיון שהגיע מבואו<sup>15</sup> נשתנה כוח זיו<sup>16</sup> לבנה וכוכבים ומזלות אין ממשלתם אלא בלילה וכיון שמגיע זמן עלות השחר נשתנו זיו אורן מפני זיו אורו של

1. כסא W.

2. W omits וכובודו חדשה.

3. W omits וסוסו חדשה.

4. Error for משוכנו: W corrects.

5. Error for זיקוקין: W corrects.

6. W omits תמים' חד' possibly by haplography.

7. Dittography: omit with W.

8. Error for בשביל: W corrects.

9. והם W.

10. Error for עסוקים: W corrects.

11. והם W.

12. Unintelligible: W omits.

13. Error for אורן: W corrects.

14. Unintelligible: W כוחה.

15. מבואה W.

16. זיוה W.

גלגל החמה ולא עוד אלא שזיו אור ואור<sup>1</sup> מאור האש זיו אור האבוקה אף על פי שהן משובחות ונאות בלילה בתוך בני אדם כיון שזרחה החמה מיד נשתנו עליהן אור זיו פניהם מפני זיו אורו של חמה אבל זיו אור השכינה שהצדיקין משתמשין בה לעולם הבא אינו נשת<sup>2</sup> עסק<sup>3</sup> מפני כל מיני מאורות שבעולם שנא' לא יהיה לך עוד השמש לאור י' ו' ה' ל' י' ו' ל' ע' ו' ל': לא יבוא עוד שמשך ויריחך לא יאסף כי<sup>4</sup> יהיה לך לאור עולם ושלמו ימי אבלך

15. מה כתוב אחר<sup>5</sup> ועמך כולם צדיקים אילו צדיקי עולם לעולם ירשו ארץ שהם יורשין עולם הבא לעו' ולעו' עול' נצר ממעי זה משיח נקרא נצר שנא' ויצא חמר מגזע ישי ונצר משרשיו יפרה מעשי<sup>6</sup> ידי להתפאר: זה טובו של עולם הבא שנא' מפרי מעשיך תשבוע הארץ: סל' פיר'

18.1. שי שי שיתר שי<sup>7</sup> על שום שהוא נקרא אל שדי וכל צדיקי עולם מביאין לפניו שי לעולם הבא שנ' לך יובילו מלכים שי: ומהו שי שהן מביאין לפניו אילו שי של צדקה שי של גמילות חסדים שי של מישרים שי של אמונה שי של רחמים שי של שלום שהיו עושין בעולם הזה לעניים ולאביונים ולדלים<sup>8</sup> ולרשים לדכים<sup>9</sup> ולעולם הבא הן באין לפניהם הן וכל צדקותיהן עמהן שנ' והלך לפניך צדקך וג' באותה שעה מעלה עליהן הקב"ה כאילו מביאין לפניו שי ומקבלין פניו שנ'<sup>10</sup> כי חסד חפסתי<sup>11</sup> ולא זבח ורעת אלהים מעולות:

2. מה עושה הק' באותה שעה עומד בעצמו ומסדיר כל צדקה וצדקה שביד כל אחד ואחד לפני כסא הכבוד ונותן להן שכר טוב על כל אחד ואחד שנ' ורב טוב לבית ישראל ואפילו על כל אמירה

1. W omits.

2. משתנה W.

3. Unintelligible: W omits.

4. omitted: W inserts ייי.

5. W אחריו.

6. מעשה W.

7. W omits שי שיתר שי and inserts כ"ח.

8. W לדלים.

9. W ולדכים.

10. W inserts [ונאמר] (Ps.17:15) [ואני בצדק אחזה פניך וג' ].

11. Error for חפסתי: W corrects.

1. Error for ה'אמא: W corrects.
2. Read ב' with W.
3. W ש'.
4. Error for ל'אמא: W corrects.
5. W ש'.
6. W ש'.
7. Read ש'אמא with W.
8. , omitted: W continues quotation from Is.58:11.
9. W א'אמא.
10. W omits: see Commentary.
11. W omits א'אמא to א'.
12. MT ו'אמא: W emends.

א, ב'אמא א', אמא א'אמא א'  
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6. לא ייגעו לריק<sup>1</sup> לריק<sup>2</sup> שאינן יגיעין לתוהו והבל כשהיו בראשונה שנא' ויאמרו<sup>3</sup> לריק יגיעתי<sup>4</sup> ולא ילדו לבהלה שאינן יולדין עוד בנים לגיהנם כי זרע ברוכי יי המה שלא יסוף הם וזרעם מן העולם וצאצאיהם אתם שהן באין ונשיהם ובניהם עמהם לעולם הבא: סל' פיר'

19.1. ת"ך שהוא עתיד לתת<sup>5</sup> ולחקר<sup>6</sup> ולחלוק פירות ומעדרנים של עולם הבא לכל צדיק וצדיק לפי שכר מעשיו לכל חסיד וחסיד לפי שכר מעשיו לכל חכם וחכם לפי שכר מעשיו לכל נבון ונבון לפי שכר מעשיו לכל נשיא ונשיא לפי שכר מעשיו<sup>7</sup> שנא' לכן אחלק לו ברבים

2. מהו לכן אחלק לו ברבים מלמד שנשבע הקב"ה לגבי ישעיה הנביא<sup>8</sup> שאני<sup>9</sup> עתיד לחלוק לכל יחיד ויחיד שבישראל חלק שכר טוב לפי מעשיו עם הצדיקים לעולם הבא

3. ואת עצומים יחלק שלל אילו אבות העולם אברהם יצחק ויעקב וכל המלכים<sup>10</sup> ונביאים וקדושים וטהורים נקיים וברורים שהיו בהן<sup>11</sup> בישראל

4. תחת אשר הערה למות נפשו ואת פושעים נמנה והוא חמא רבים נשא אשר על שום שמסרו את עצמן על קדושת שמו של הקב"ה קשה כשאל ק' שהן מרחיקין את עצמן מן עצתו ומן קנאתו של קרח ועדתו שירדו כשהן בחיים לשאל שנא' וירדו הם וכל וג'<sup>12</sup> ועם מיתים נחשב על שום שהן נחשבין כמיתים בעולם הזה לפיכך

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1. in margin. לא יגעו 1.

2. W omits.

3. MT ואני אמרתי: W emends.

4. Error for יגיעתי: W corrects.

5. Error for לתת? W emends.

6. W omits.

7. W shortens this paragraph by omitting לפי שכר מעשיו and repeated nouns.

8. לגבי ישעיה הנביא: W omits.

9. W omits.

10. המלאכים: W.

11. W omits.

12. . וירדו חיים שאולה: So MT: W.

נוחלין חיי העולם שנקראו חיים שנא' ראה חיים עם אשה<sup>1</sup> ימי  
חיך לא נאמר אלא כל ימי חיך של עולם<sup>2</sup>

5. ולפושעים יפגיע שהן היו מבקשין רחמים מלפני הקב"ה על כל  
פושעים שבישראל לְכַפֵּר על פשעיהם ועל חטאותיהן<sup>3</sup> שאין  
פגיעה אילא פרקליטין שנא' שמעוני ופגעו לי: ד' א' אין פגיעה  
אלא תפלה שנא' ואתה אל תתפלל בעדם<sup>4</sup>:

6. ד' א' לכן אחלק לו ברבים מלמד שלא הכתוב אלא כנגד משה  
שהוא עתיד למול שכר לעולם הבא כנגד הרבים<sup>5</sup> וגדולים ונכבדים  
שבישראל

7. ואת עצמ' יחלק שלל שהוא נוטל שלל וחוסן רב כנגד אבות  
העולם אברהם יצחק ויעקב מלכים ונביאים שאין עצומים האמור כן  
אלא אבות ומפני מה נקרא עצומים מפני שהן עצומים בגדולתם  
ובצדקתם ובכבודתם<sup>6</sup> לעולם הבא

8. ואת פושעים נמנה שהוא נחשב עם מיתי מדבר ולא בא לארץ  
ישראל

9. ולפושעים יפגיע שהוא עמד בעשרים וארבע<sup>7</sup> מקומות בתפלה  
ותחנונים לפני הקב"ה והיה מבקש עליהן<sup>8</sup> רחמים על ישראל  
ומחזירן<sup>9</sup> בתשובה לפני הקב"ה כדי שלא ימקו בעוונותיהן

10. לפיכך הוא נוטל שכר טוב כנגד כולן לעולם הבא באותה שעה  
פותח הקב"ה את<sup>10</sup> בשבחו של משה בפני כל הצדיקים כולן ואומר  
להן לא לא<sup>11</sup> ידעתם מה עשה משה עבדי בעולם צדקתי וחסדי

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1. 'ג' omitted.

2. W omits quotation from Eccl.9:9 and its interpretation.

3. Error for חטאותיהן: W corrects.

4. 'ג' omitted: W continues quotation from Jer.7:16.

5. רבים W.

6. ובכבודם W.

7. Error for וארבעה: W corrects.

8. W omits.

9. Error for מחזירן.

10. Omit with W.

11. Dittography: omit with W.

עשה עם בני אדם ומשפטי היה לומר להן לישאל אשאל, אשאל, אשאל  
עשה ומשפטיו עם ישראל;

תמת בחמד אלאלה רב אל עאלמין

אם שגיתי במעשי

ירחמני אלוה עושי;

אני אלנתן הכהן בן רבי אליעזר הכהן כתבתי בשבילי את המדרש  
הזה להגות בו בשלום ובשלוחה א' נ' ס' ברוך הקורא ואור הגנוב..

נמר

## PART THREE

### TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY



Sometimes he expounded from its beginning to its end; at other times he expounded from its end to its beginning. Sometimes he expounded from its end corresponding to its beginning; at other times he expounded from its middle to its beginning and to its end.

That which he expounded from its beginning to its end:

אב גר הו זח מי כל מן סע פצ קר שת.

That which he expounded from its end to its beginning:

תש רק צפ עם נם לך יט חז וה דג בא.

That which he expounded from its end corresponding to its beginning:

תא שב רג קר צה פו עז סח נט מי לך.

That which he expounded from its middle to its beginning and its end:

לא מב נג סד עה פו צז קח רט שי תך.

אב גר הו זח מי - in what manner?

## Chapter One

1.1. Aleph Beth - this is the Holy One, blessed be He, who is father to all from its beginning to its end. For in the beginning, before he created, he was riding upon the wings of the wind and upon the flames of the storm, with four kinds of fiery lights around him, corresponding to the four winds of the world, blazing before him. These are: crimson fire, adorned fire and red fire, white fire. Crimson faces the east, adorned faces the west, red faces the north, white faces the south.

2. At the same time the world was filled with water on water, wave on wave, gale on gale, tempest within tempest, storm-wind within storm-wind. And the Shekinah is over their heads, and the sound of his word is upon them to silence them, as it is said, The voice of the Lord was upon the water, the God of glory etc. (Ps.29:3).

3. And four kinds of creatures - great winds - were around the Shekinah at every moment. These are: a hovering wind, a strong wind, an earthquake wind and a storm-wind. Whence the hovering wind? as it is said, And the wind of God hovered etc. (Gen.1:2). Whence the strong wind? as it is said, And the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind. (Ex.14:21). Whence the earthquake wind? as it is said, After the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake etc. (1 Kgs 19:11). Whence the storm-wind? as it is said, The storm-wind does his word. (Ps.148:8).

4. And upon the head of each wind swirled the wheels of the Shekinah, and upon the head of each wheel swirled flame and torch, burning coal and fiery flame. A tempest was his chariot, the storm-wind was his seat. His abode is flame and burning coal, his place blazing fire, as it is said, For behold the Lord will come in fire, and like the storm-wind... (Is.66:15). And it says, Fire goes before him. (Ps.97:3).

5. And out of the sound of the praise of many waters, the Holy One, blessed be He, gave his consent to create the world. And afterwards, by his word, he created all of them, as it is said, For he spoke and it came to be, he commanded and it stood forth.(Ps.33:9). And it says, But he is unchangeable and who can turn him? What he desires, that he does. (Job.23:13).

The chapter ends.

The alphabetical framework selected by the author of Midrash Aleph Beth for the structure of his text allows him to begin with the noun אב 'father', - the first two letters of the Hebrew alphabet - and this forms the basis for his description of creation. The phrase 'Father of all' not only reflects the nature of the relationship between God and his created world, but also, for the purposes of describing the creative process itself, it conveys the idea of God as the originator and begetter of the world.

The use of the noun 'father' to mean 'creator' can be found in Job 38:28-29, where God introduces himself to Job in a series of questions on the creation of the universe:

Has the rain a father, or who has begotten the  
drops of dew? From whose womb did the ice come  
forth, and who has given birth to the hoarfrost of  
heaven?

This passage is permeated with the language of procreation - אב, ילד, בטן - to express God's total involvement in the act of creating the world. Another biblical theme is that of God as the father of his people Israel whom he created and elected. We find the most direct language describing this relationship in Deut.32, the Song of Moses. In vs.4 God is described as the Rock who bore them. The verb ילד is used, a verb normally reserved for use with a feminine subject since it describes the act of giving birth. The term מחוללן, which is normally associated with the pain of a woman

giving birth, is also used in vs.18. There are other passages in scripture which describe the relationship between God and Israel as that of a father and son (2), but it is only in Deut.32 that the idea of God being the natural parent of Israel is so explicitly stated. Elsewhere in the scriptures the powerful father/son metaphor is used to reflect the everlasting covenant in terms of the divine love and protection provided for Israel by God, and conversely to prompt Israel to reciprocate with love, honour, obedience and faithfulness towards God.

In Is.45:9-12 the images of a potter, a father, and the Lord of creation are bound together to produce the picture of God as a master craftsman who stretched out the heavens with his hands. At once he is the all-powerful creator and sustainer of the world, and the father, the maker, of Israel, who is concerned with the fate of his offspring. In this passage, and, for example, also in Is.63, the title 'father' used of God does involve the image of creator, but the idea uppermost in the writer's mind is the present relationship between God and Israel. In that context, God the Father of Israel will act on their behalf. It is this aspect of the father/son metaphor that is most frequently utilised in later texts, including our Midrash. The father/son metaphor reveals its full significance in Midrash Aleph Beth when God the Father redeems his children, the righteous remnant of Israel (3).

Even though the idea of God as the father of the people he possesses may not occupy a central place in the religion of the Israelites, it is effective as one of the many images the Bible uses

to describe the relationship between God and creation, and between God and Israel. When we turn to literature of the post-biblical period we discover that the concept of God as father is remembered, but not noticeably developed (4). Again it is used to express the unique relationship between God and Israel, either corporately or as individuals. For example:

...He is our Lord and God, he is our Father  
forever. (Tob.13:4).

And may the Lord be a father to you, and you the  
first-born son. (Jub.19:29).

Here we see a reflection of the metaphorical father/son language of 1 Sam.7:14 and Ps.2:7, passages which describe the king of Israel being adopted as a son of God. Jub.1:25 extends this concept to apply to all Israelites:

...They will know that these are my children, and  
that I am their father.

In none of these examples do we find any evidence of creation being a feature of the fatherhood of God, and this tends to be true also of subsequent Jewish literature. When biblical passages containing a reference to God as father are discussed, they are usually interpreted in terms of the covenant relationship between God and Israel. For example, the phrase, 'My beloved is mine and I am his', (Sg of Sgs 2:16), is interpreted in Cant.R.16.1 to be the words of Israel addressed to God, and one of the metaphors introduced to illustrate this interpretation is that of a father and a son. Moreover, in Num.R.17.1 the duties of a father to a son are seen as a reflection of God's duties to Israel (5).

There are a few exceptions, however, where the concept of God as a father is not only seen as a fitting metaphor for the relationship between God and Israel, but is also used to describe God as father of creation and procreator of Israel (6). In PR 27.3 when Jer.2:4 is discussed 'Hear the word of the Lord', Prov.23:22 is cited for clarification:

Hear the word of the Lord. Scripture says, Hearken to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old. All that your father says to you, you are obliged to heed: Hearken to your father who begot you...the one of whom Moses said, You are unmindful of the Rock that begot you. (Deut.32:18) (7).

The closest parallel to the phrase in our Midrash is found in Midrash Mishle's comment on Prov.10:1:

בן חכם ישמח אב: זה הקב"ה שהוא אב לכל (8).

In its use of the title 'father' for God in the context of creation, Midrash Aleph Beth is echoing a biblical concept clearly stated in Deut.32:6, 18. Inseparable from this concept, as, for example, in Ps.2:7 and Is.63:6, is Israel's election as the people of God. By beginning the Midrash with the letters א"ב the author introduces God as Father, at once Creator and Elector of Israel. This is made explicit in chapter 3 where God states, 'I did not create my world except for the sake of Israel' (AB 3.3).

The letters א"ב begin the alphabet, and they also form the noun אב 'father'. They are identified with God who as Father is the instigator and controller of everything from the beginning of time. To illustrate this the Midrash takes us back to God's existence

before creation, to the point where God made his decision to create the world out of the primordial chaos. Most of the biblical language which forms the basis of this passage is taken from Ps.104 and Ez.1. Ps.104 is a powerful poetic description of God's activity before creation when he was riding on the clouds and the wings of the wind, and his subsequent work of creating the mountains and valleys of the earth from the watery chaos:

Thou art clothed with honour and majesty, who coverest thyself with light as with a garment, who hast stretched out the heavens like a tent, who hast laid the beams of their chambers on the waters, who makest the clouds thy chariots, who ridest upon the wings of the wind, who makest the winds thy messengers, fire and flame their ministers. Ps.104:1-4.

Many of these words and ideas occur in this chapter of the Midrash (9). Ez.1 and, to a lesser extent, Dan.7, are two other texts that are alluded to here. A storm-wind (רוח סערה) in Ez.1:14 describes the beginning of the theophany experienced by the prophet, and in our text the storm-wind is one of the elements that was pre-existent with God (AB 1.2-3). The two verbs used in Ezekiel to describe the fire in God's presence, סבִּיב and מִתְלַקַּח, appear in the same form in our text. It is also worth noting that the uncommon noun שֹׁבֵיב, 'flames', used in AB 1.1 occurs in Dan.7:9 where, again, a theophany is being described (10).

Having given an account of God's existence before creation, the author turns his attention to the condition the 'world' was in at that time. This description of primordial chaos is based on the phrase וְהָיָה רָקָא in Gen.1:2. As in the case of Genesis, there is no concept



of creatio ex nihilo since the waters existed before creation (11). Our text, AB 1.2, provides a midrash on Gen.1:2, describing the waters over which the the Spirit of God had hovered the moment before creation began. Instead of the Spirit we have the Shekinah to describe God's presence over the watery chaos. In chapter 4 the Shekinah is used again to describe God's presence, as it moves away from humanity and the earth to dwell with the angels in heaven (12). The Shekinah as it is used there signifies God's physical presence as it is described in Gen.3:8, walking in the Garden of Eden. If our author is consistent in his use of the term, then we could argue that his use of 'Shekinah' here in preference to 'Spirit of God' stresses God's personal and physical involvement in the acts of creation (13). This would be in line with the anthropomorphism, which is sometimes extreme, that is a major feature throughout the Midrash (14). The voice of God is said to be upon the face of the waters to silence them, quoting Ps.29:3. This same verse appears in Gen.R.5.4 (commenting on Gen.1:9) when Ben Zoma explains how the voice of God guided the waters to create the dry land.

The number four recurs in this chapter to describe the four fires surrounding God, corresponding to the four winds ,or points of the compass, and the four kinds of wind surrounding the Shekinah. The number provides a balanced structure to contrast with the disordered watery mass. Three elements are described here: the fire of God, the wind of the Shekinah, and the water of the primordial chaos. In rabbinic tradition these are counted as the pre-existent elements from which the world was created:

Three things preceded the creation of the world -  
water, wind and fire. Ex.R.15.22 (15).

The 'wheels' of the Shekinah swirl above the head of each wind (AB 1.4) . The noun used here for 'wheel' is גלגל, rather than אופן as in the case of Ez.1. גלגל does appear in Dan.7:9, however, and is used in the second Merkabah vision of Ezekiel recounted in chapter 10 alongside אופן (16). Above the head of each wheel 'swirled flame and torch, burning coal and fiery flame', (AB 1.4). Again we can note dependence on Ez.1, since burning coals and torches, גחל and לפיד, form part of Ezekiel's vision of the four living creatures.

Once God's existence prior to creation has been described, the Midrash moves to the moment when God made the decision to create the world (AB 1.5). Once more the narrative contains language which echos Ez.1. God's decision to create comes מקול שבחן של מים רבים , 'out of the sound of the praise of many waters'. In Ez.1:25 the voice of God is mentioned after the noise of the wings of the living creatures has been compared to קול מים רבים , 'the sound of many waters'. There is another biblical allusion here, probably that which Ez.1 itself is reflecting, namely Ps.93:4: מקלות מים רבים . At this point the Psalm seems to be the direct basis of our text since there the floods and the waters are praising God. A parallel tradition exists in Gen.R.5.1:

At the very beginning of God's creation, the praise of the Almighty ascended from nought but the water, as it is written, From the voice of many waters, (Ps.93:4) ...Said the Holy One, blessed be He, 'If these which have neither mouth

nor speech praise me, how much more will I be  
praised when man is created (17).

This first chapter of Midrash Aleph Beth produces a powerful image of God as it describes his control over the forces of chaos before and at the time of his decision to create the world. We may note that God is alone except for the elemental forces when he makes this decision. There are no creatures present, either heavenly or earthly, to influence him or assist him in his work. This becomes an important issue later on in the narrative when Satan challenges God's supremacy over creation, and claims to have been a partner in creation, working alongside God (18).

## Notes

1. For comments on the Preface see pp.20-22.
2. E.g., Ex.4:22; Deut.14:1; Hos.11:1; Jer.3:19; Is.1:2, 63:16, 64:8; Mal.1:6, 2:10.
3. The best example of this comes in chap.17 where God presides at the eschatological banquet like a father entertaining his family; see below AB 17.2-3 and commentary.
4. E.g., Sir.23:1, 4, 51:10, 3 Macc.5:7, 7:6; Wisd.11:10; Jub.1:24f, 28, 19:29.
5. Other examples can be found in b.Shab.89b; b.B.B.10a; Ex.R.33.5; Num.R.17.1; and Deut.R.2.15 where we are told that God remains Israel's kith and kin whatever the situation.
6. In Pes.Rab.24.2 God is the third partner in the begetting of a child, implying that his involvement in the creation of humanity is not restricted to Adam and Eve.
7. It is natural for the rabbis to link these two passages, Deut.32:18 and Prov.23:22, since they include the only two occurrences in scripture where the verb **לָלַךְ** has a masculine subject and a 2nd person singular pronominal suffix (**לְךָ**).
8. Cf Josephus, Ant.vii 380: '...addressing him as Father as source of the universe, as Creator of things human and divine'.
9. **הַדּוֹרָה** and **מְאֹרֹת** in AB 1.1 are reminiscent of **הָדָר** and **אֹר** in the Psalm. **מְאֹרֹת** also recalls the creation of the sun, moon and stars in Gen.1:14ff.
10. In the theophany in Job, God appears out of the storm, 38:1, 40:6; and in Ps.50:3 God appears surrounded by fire and storm.
11. See Gen.R.1.5, 9, for a rabbinic discussion on creatio ex nihilo; cf Winston, 'The Book of Wisdom's Theory of Cosmology'; and Urbach, op.cit., vol.1, pp.189ff.
12. See AB 4.1 and commentary.
13. In AB the Shekinah seems to be simply an epithet for God, as it is occasionally used in the Targumim and Tannaitic literature, see Urbach, op.cit., vol.1, pp.41-43. The use of the concept of the Shekinah does not, at the same time, encourage

a transcendent understanding of God – both are capable of an intimate relationship with the world and, in particular, with Israel. God/the Shekinah dwells in Aravoth (the seventh heaven), – cf b.Hag.12b – far removed from the earth, only because humanity forced his departure (AB 4.1,5,7). The ideal is for God to dwell on earth – as he does in the World to Come (AB 17.8).

14. See above pp.7-8 and notes.
15. In SY §25-28, fire water and air are the three essential elements from which everything was created. Fire is above, water below, and air is the balancing item between them. This is a useful framework to apply to the description given in AB 1.1: above everything is God surrounded by fire, below is the watery chaos, and in the middle is the Shekinah surrounded by wind. In AB 1.1 the four points of the compass (the four winds) seem to depict the all-pervading presence of God, In SY chap.1 they seem to depict the all-pervading elements of fire, water and air. The use of these three elements is discussed by Hayman, 'Some Observations on Sefer Yesirah: 1. Its use of Scripture'.
16. 'Ophanim' in the Pseudepigrapha and in rabbinic literature came to refer to an angelic order in the heavens. This meaning has influenced our Midrash (see e.g. AB 2.6), and explains its preference for **לללל**, the common noun for 'wheel', avoiding confusion.
17. See also Gen.R.28.2.
18. See AB 8.5.

2.1. He Vav, Zayin Heth - because he [removed] from his place. <sup>And</sup> he stood with his power like a mighty man. He took his position in his might to create all his world by his will. He rebuked the waters and they fled from before him, and he stood like a builder, to build and to lay a foundation. His right hand spread out the seven heavens above; his hand founded the earth, the abysses beneath. And by the breath of his mouth God commanded and created all their host, as it is said, My hand also founded the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens etc. (Is.48:13). And it says, By the word of the Lord the heavens were made etc. (Ps.33:6).

2. He called them and he placed them, one opposite the other. And he put his name upon them so that they were not divided. He joined them with a support, one opposite the other. And he sealed them with the seal: 'I AM who I AM'. The edges of heaven joined the edges of the earth, the foundations of the firmament with the foundations of the world, the orders of the height with the orders of the depth, the border of the heavens with the border of the abysses. All of them he sealed with his seal, in the name of 'I AM who I AM', so that they will not destroy all of his world. For anyone who mentions the name 'I AM who I AM' without a seal immediately destroys the world.

7. After that he called them, and suspended them, and placed them in the world. And all of them stood fast by his word until the end of the world, as it is said, The Mighty One, God the Lord, speaks and

summons the earth etc. (Ps.50:1). And whence that they stood fast? as it is said, I call them, they stand forth together (Is.48:13).

4. He lifted, he joined his world, and he joined it to his throne, and he took up his throne to the heavens of heavens. He lowered his glory onto the four creatures, and his Shekinah rested upon the wheels of fire. He put his chariot upon burning wheels, and the seat of his honour upon the fiery cherubim. He lifted himself up and he dwelt in the height of the world.

5. He looks at his works and he sees that they are good, as it is said, God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. (Gen.1:31). And there is nothing 'good' besides the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is said, The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all he has made. (Ps.145:9). Then the Holy One, blessed be He, looks and sees his throne and his glory and his Shekinah and the seat of his honour and the holy hayyot and the ophanim, and the cherubim and the troops (of angels) and the armies, who are standing in the height of the world. He opened his mouth in praise of himself, and he said, 'I have done well for I have established a place for my glory.'

6. Immediately hayyot, ophanim, cherubim, galgalim, seraphim and the armies came forth from beneath the throne of glory. And they surround his throne on four sides, and they were embracing and kissing each other. They saturated his name with many songs, thanksgivings, rejoicings, hymns and praises, and say, May the glory of the Lord be forever etc. (Ps.104:31).

7. Another interpretation: And behold, it was very good. (Gen.1:31). 'Good' is nothing other than Torah, as it is said, I give you good precepts etc. (Prov.4:2). It teaches that when Torah came from her bridal chamber, she dressed herself in all manner of jewelry and royal ornaments, and stood and danced before the Holy One, blessed be He, and made the heart of the Shekinah rejoice. She opens her lips in wisdom, and her tongue in understanding. And she praises the name of the Omnipresent with all manner of praise and song.

8. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, said to her himself, in each and every firmament, saying, 'Be silent for me, the voice of every creature that I have created until I hear the sound of the song of Torah.' When the Holy One, blessed be He, said to her, 'Show me your appearance', she bowed her head and came out. The splendour of her face covered all the chambers of Arvoth Raqia.

9. When he said to her, 'Let me hear your voice', she lifted her voice in song, in praise and in pleasant tune until all the world was shaken. Then all the orders of creation asked each other and said, 'What is this great noise that we have heard?' Then a Bat Kol went forth and said, 'Torah herself is praising and applauding before the Holy One, blessed be He, who created the world.' All the orders of creation replied and said, The Lord's Torah is perfect, it restores the soul. (Ps.19:7).

10. Another interpretation: And behold, it was very good. (Gen.1:31).



'Good' is nothing other than Moses, as it is said, She saw him that he was good etc. (Ex.2:2). It teaches that when the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed the throne of glory to Torah, he brought out all the souls of the righteous - the souls of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - who will carry out the Torah and perform the commandments before Torah is given from Sinai. He brought out the souls of Israel who will accept the Torah at a future time. And he led them past before her.

11. After this he brought out the soul of Moses from beneath his throne, since he was about to explain the Torah in seventy tongues. And he showed him to Torah, and he said to her, 'My daughter, rejoice and be glad in this Moses, my servant, for he is destined to become your bridegroom and your husband. He it is who will accept you and explain what you say to the sixty myriads of Israel.' Then Torah answered, and said before him, 'How long until the time of my rejoicing arrives?' He said to her, 'From the day that I created you until a thousand generations have been fulfilled.' As it is said, All the world...word etc. (?).

The chapter ends.

In describing the moment before creation began, the first chapter set the scene for the second where the act of creation itself is recounted. Here God is characterised as the master architect and craftsman who forms the foundations and marks out the boundaries for the heavens and the earth by drawing on familiar language and imagery from Ps.104 and Isaiah. One initial comment we can make is that here the physical action of creating is stressed. God is compared to a builder laying foundations. It is by his bare hands that he creates. This would seem to be in sharp contrast to the more transcendent figure in chapter 1 who created the world 'by his word' (AB 1.5). However, as we noted in that chapter, there are indications that God is physically involved in what is to become the world, even at the moment before creation (1). These indications become fully developed in this chapter, where God physically exerts himself in his work of creation (2), and become a major characteristic throughout the rest of the Midrash (3).

The two pairs of letters which form the acrostic framework for this chapter are ך"ו and ן"ו. The significance of these letters in relation to the contents of the chapter is not immediately apparent. ך"ו could be an abbreviation for the opening phrase ך"ו, but, since almost every chapter opens with this formula, this would seem to be unlikely. Another possibility for the function of the first pair of letters is their relationship with the tetragrammaton יהוה, which includes both letters. Later on in the chapter we have a clear allusion to Ex.3:14 with the phrase ך"ו אשר ך"ו, 'I am

who I am'. The biblical context for that phrase is God's introduction of himself to Moses. The etymological link of God's name with the verb **היה**, automatically illustrates how his nature is revealed through his actions. Both the work of creation and the Exodus are the supreme examples of God at work in the world. Isaiah, in evoking both events, combines them so that they appear inextricable:

Was it not thou that didst dry up the sea, the  
waters of the great deep; that thou didst make  
the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to  
pass over? Is.51:10.

God's name and his work of creation described here could be associated with the chapter's alphabetical framework.

At this point we should note that the acrostic framework has been disrupted since the letters **ז** and **ח** which follow **ק** and **ל**, the letters of the first chapter, have been omitted. According to the ms there is no evidence that part of the text is missing here. If there had been an omission, it would have had to have occurred through an oversight by the copyist, or else have been missing in the ms used by him. There are other examples in the Midrash where, although a particular alphabet combination is being followed, it would appear that it has not been found necessary on the part of the author to account for every letter or pair of letters (4). Perhaps by examining the content of the present chapter we might discover evidence that the omission is deliberate rather than accidental.

This chapter concerns God's act of creating the world. When we look at early Jewish literature on this subject we discover that

there are many examples of the tradition which state that God created the world with the letter ה (5). This is derived from an interpretation of Gen.2:4:

These are the generations of the heavens and the world when they were created.

Instead of reading בְּהִבְרָאָם to mean 'when they were created', the text is pointed as בְּהִבְרָאָם, 'by ה he created them'. Is.26:4 can be cited as further evidence:

For by ה and י the Lord formed the worlds (6).

The oldest authority for this interpretation is R. Johanan b. Zakkai (7), of the first century C.E.. The manner in which it is embedded in Jewish biblical exegesis would seem to bear witness to its antiquity. In the MT the ה in בְּהִבְרָאָם is written as a small letter, perhaps indicating the text can be better understood without. Evidence from earlier Jewish exegesis, however, suggests that the text was normally understood with the ה.

Since this chapter deals with the subject of the creation of the world, the tradition cited above seems to dictate the letters for the chapter, even though they deviate from the actual order of the alphabet (8).

The other pair of letters given at the beginning of the chapter, ח"ו, however, seems to bear no relation to its contents. One solution to this problem also throws light on the awkward syntactical structure of the opening phrase שְׁהוּא מִמְקוֹמוֹ, which would seem to be lacking a verb. If we take the letters as one word, we would

have the participle **נִי** from the verb **נָיַן** 'to move'. The awkward phrase would then be transformed into a sentence: '...because he moves from his place'. What is more, if we added a perfect Hiphil of that verb, **נִינָה**, it would contain three of the chapter's four letters. This latter suggestion is in keeping with the opening lines of this chapter, although in many other chapters there is a preference for participles at the beginning.

In AB 2.1 God is compared to a mighty hero, **גִּבּוֹר**. This noun is frequently used in biblical and post-biblical literature to describe past heroes in Israel's history, for example, Nimrod, Gideon and David (9). It also appears in biblical text in reference to God (10), and in later texts **כִּגְבוֹר** becomes an epithet for God (11). There are also biblical parallels for the phrase we find in our text, comparing God to a 'mighty man' (12). The context for two of these parallels, Is.43:13 and Ps.78:65, is one of action where God is about to go forth and rout his enemies. Likewise, in our text God has arisen and moved from his dwelling place to go forth and create. Our text continues: 'he took his position in his might (**בְּגִבּוֹרָתוֹ**) to create all his world by his will'. This is reminiscent of Ps.66:7: By his might he rules the world, **מִשַׁל בְּגִבּוֹרָתוֹ עוֹלָם**. By using biblical motifs that are associated with God's mighty deeds in history in the context of creation, the Midrash is telling us that creation is one such mighty deed. God's work in creation is the greatest expression of God's power and might, and its resulting world, experienced by every living creature in every generation, is a constant witness to that power and might. If God has the power to create the great and marvellous world we live in, the Midrash

implies, what will be the effect when God once more chooses to act? In our Midrash, in keeping with Jewish thought (13), cosmology is inextricably bound up with eschatology.

In his description of creation, our author selects poetic language from the Psalms and Isaiah in preference to the language of Genesis. For example, he begins his account by recounting how God rebuked the primordial waters. This tradition is found in the poetic texts of the Bible and is only loosely comparable to the creation of dry land described in Gen.1:9-10. AB 2.1 cites Ps.104 as his source:

Thou didst set the earth on its foundations, so  
that it should never be shaken. Thou didst cover  
it with the deep as with a garment; the waters  
stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they  
fled... Ps.104:5-7.

The Midrash does not use the verb פָּנָה, 'to flee', which is found in vs.7 of the Psalm, but prefers the verb פָּרַח which has the same meaning. It would seem that the author is reserving the verb פָּנָה for his description of the judgment and destruction of the world, rather than for its creation (14). In other biblical passages which describe God's lordship over the waters, namely Is.50:2; Ps.106:9 and Nah.1:4 (15), the verb פָּרַח appears to describe how God 'dried up' the waters. In our Midrash we may have a pun on פָּרַח, which becomes פָּנָה, the verb "to flee" when the letters are reversed. In AB 2.1 a whole collection of biblical themes relating to God's domination of the waters are brought together.

The allusion to Ps.104 continues in AB 2.1 when God is compared to a builder. In the Psalm the same imagery is used when God is

said to set the earth on its foundations (16). In Genesis the verb **בָּנָה** 'to build' is used to describe God's work of creating Eve from Adam's rib. Perhaps the biblical text that is closest to the contents of our Midrash at this point is Amos:9:6:

He who builds his upper chambers in the heavens,  
and founds his vault upon the earth...

Here God is **בֹּנֵה** 'the builder', making the heavens and the earth. Moreover, the Amos passage includes the verb **יָסַד** 'to found', which also appears in AB 2.1.

Is.48:13 is used as the basis for the description of the formation of the heavens and the earth. The midrashic element in the exegesis of this verse is the reference to the seven heavens on high, the earth in the middle and the abysses below. Although the concept of the seven heavens is not found in the Bible, in b.Hag.12a biblical proof-texts are discovered for the names of each of them (17). This concept can be traced back to apocalyptic literature (18), and is taken up as one of the main themes in the Hekhaloth texts (19).

By referring to the plurality of the abysses below, complementing the seven heavens above, the great physical depth of creation, as well as its height, is stressed. Ps.33 is alluded to and referred to directly in AB 2.1, and the concept of the abysses is taken from vs.7 of the Psalm: 'he put the abysses in storehouses'.

The work of creating the heavens and the earth is combined into one single act of creation. Neither heaven nor earth is created first: rather they are created together and bound together parallel

and equal, just as Isaiah had explained:

My hand laid the foundation of the earth, my right  
hand spread out the heavens; when I call to them,  
they stand forth together. Is.47:13.

In b.Hag.12a the phrase 'they stand forth together' is interpreted  
to mean that heaven and earth are bound together:

...When I call to them they stand forth  
together...What is the meaning of 'they stand  
forth together'? That they cannot be loosened  
from one another.

Together they make up God's created world. As the story of this  
world unfolds in the Midrash we discover that the two are not only  
bound together in their creation, but also in their subsequent  
judgment and destruction. The rabbis debated the question  
concerning which was created first, the heavens or the earth, and  
this was a point of disagreement between the schools of Hillel and  
Shammai. Hillel contended that earth was created first, whereas  
Shammai insisted it was the heavens (20). In b.Hag.12 the two views  
are reconciled by the 'sages' who, like Midrash Aleph Beth quote  
Is.48:13: 'My hand also founded the earth, and my right hand spread  
out the heavens'. 'My hand' is taken to refer to God's left hand.  
Thus the two were created simultaneously - earth by the left hand,  
heaven by the right (21). This reflects the impression given in  
Gen.1:1: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth'.

The binding together of earth and heaven allows for dualism, but  
only in the context of a created unity. Furthermore, the Creator of  
this physical world is God, the master architect and builder, and he  
alone is responsible for the work of creation (22).



We are given the picture of a balanced, unified world. The physical structures of the heavens are parallel to those of the earth. The parallel between the seven heavens and the abysses appears here only in a nascent form, whereas in other cosmological texts it is made explicit through the numbering of seven 'earths', each with a name (23). The author of Midrash Aleph Beth does not concern himself with such cosmological speculation, only naming the heavens when, at a later stage in his story, he recounts the Shekinah's journey through them (24).

When the heavens and the earth and the abysses have been joined together they are sealed with the divine formula: אֱהִיָּה 'I am who I am'. This enigmatic phrase is taken from Ex.3:14 where it is the reply God gives to Moses when he asks for the name of the God who has commissioned him. The idea of this formula being used as a seal for the newly created universe is a common one in the Hekhalot texts (25). In the apocryphal 'Prayer of Manasseh' the divine name is used as a seal for the primordial waters:

...who has shackled the sea by your word of command, who has confined the deep and sealed it with your terrible and glorious name (26).

The noun חֹתֶם 'seal', is used in Job 38 in the context of creation. God appears to Job out of the whirlwind to explain to him that his ways are far beyond human comprehension, citing creation to demonstrate the point. When God's control over the dawn is described, we are told that the earth 'is transformed like clay

under a seal' (vs.14).

The use of the seal in Midrash Aleph Beth suggests that it is understood in terms of a magic formula:

All of them he sealed with his seal, in the name of 'I AM who I AM', so that they will not destroy all of his world. For anyone who mentions (הַמְזִכִּיר) the name (שֵׁם) 'I AM who I AM' without a seal immediately destroys the world. AB 2.2.

There does seem to be an allusion in this passage to Amos 6:10-11:

And he said, 'Hush'. For the name of the Lord must not be mentioned (לְהִזְכִּיר בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה). For the Lord will command and the great house will be rubble, and the small house will be splinters.

This verse from Amos seems to furnish us with the precise background to this passage in our Midrash. In Amos we are told that the name of God must not be mentioned lest the great and the small houses collapse. In the Midrash we are told that the formula 'I am who I am' must not be mentioned lest the heavens and the earth be destroyed. The name of God and the formula 'I am who I am' are inextricably linked when God divulges his name to Moses in Ex.3. Our text would seem to be providing a midrash on the verses from Amos. The great and the small houses are interpreted in terms of heaven and earth, and the collapse of the former in terms of the possible destruction of the latter (27).

Having sealed his newly created world, God joins it to his throne which is then taken up to the highest heaven. This section relies heavily on Ezekiel's vision of the Merkabah for its language and

imagery. The throne on which God is seated is in the highest heaven, and in Ez.1:26 we are told that the throne is high above, over the heads of the living creatures. The Midrash uses language such as **ארבע חיות**, 'four living creatures'; **כסא**, 'throne'; **גלגל**, 'wheel'; **כבוד**, 'glory'; **אש**, 'fire'; all of which can be found in Ez.1 and 10. The author of Midrash Aleph Beth builds on this language by introducing the Shekinah. He tells us that the Shekinah rests upon the wheels of fire. This seems to be in place of the spirit, or 'the spirit of the living creatures', mentioned in Ez.1:20-21 and 10:17. Again, as in the case of AB 1.3, we find the less tangible concept of 'spirit' being replaced by the actual presence of God, traditionally referred to as the Shekinah (28).

According to the biblical text, once the world has been created God surveys his work and pronounces that it is good. This scene is described in the Midrash, and the pronouncement from Gen.1:31 is referred to directly. But there is an important modification. In Genesis humanity has just been created in the image of God and this is portrayed as the climax of God's work. The rest of creation is there simply to serve the needs of man and woman. It is this hierarchy of nature, on earth, that God surveys and declares to be good. In Midrash Aleph Beth God is surveying the heavens, or rather the highest heaven, where the throne of glory resides and is declaring that to be good. The earth has to wait to be re-created in the World to Come before it can be declared to be good, since it is only then that God establishes a throne of glory on the new earth corresponding to the throne in the new heavens (29).

The creatures of heaven respond to God's joy at his creation with their own songs and praises in his honour (AB 2.6). In b.Ber.7b the same verb **סָבַר**, 'to saturate' - with praise - is used in reference to David, rather than the heavenly creatures, in a discussion of the etymology of the name 'Ruth':

What is the meaning of 'Ruth' (**רוּת**)? R. Johanan said: Because she was privileged to be the ancestress of David, who saturated (**סָבַר**) the Holy One, blessed be He, with songs and hymns.

The language found here is noticeably close to that in AB 2.6, but whether our Midrash is alluding to, or building on, this tradition as it is found in the Talmud is impossible to say.

Included in this chapter are two further interpretations of Gen:1:31: 'And behold it was very good'. These complete the account of creation by introducing the concept of Torah. Torah is so central to Judaism that it is traditionally traced back to the time before the world came into existence (30). In our Midrash the Torah has a central role to play in the history of the world since it is the standard by which all behaviour is judged. Adherence to it means a share in the life of the World to Come (31). The rabbis transferred the language of personification, which in the scriptures was associated with the concept of wisdom, to Torah. For example, Prov.8:22 is interpreted in terms of Torah rather than wisdom:

Six things preceded the creation of the world; some of them were actually created, while the creation of the others was already contemplated. The Torah and the Throne of Glory were created. The Torah, for it is written, The Lord made me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. Gen.R.1.4.

The same interpretation is applied to Prov.3:19:

R. Banayah said: 'The world and the fullness of it were created only for the sake of Torah: The Lord for the sake of wisdom founded the earth. Gen.R.1.4.

AB 2.7, in its interpretation of Gen.1:31, tells us that there is nothing 'good' except the Torah, as is demonstrated in Prov.4:2: 'I give you good precepts'. 'Good precepts' means the Torah (32). Torah, as in the case of Lady Wisdom in the Bible, is personified as a woman. This personification is emphasised in our Midrash by referring to her as 'Torah' without the definite article. Here the woman Torah is not described with the biblical imagery of Lady Wisdom, but instead the biblical imagery of love, as found in the poetry of the Song of Songs, is used.

The Torah adorns herself and comes before God's presence as a bride. She seems to be making herself an offering to God in response to his wonderful work of creation. God asks two things of Torah: to see her appearance, and to hear her voice. This is a clear allusion to Sg of Sgs 2:14 where precisely the same language is found: מֵרָאִיךְ הִרְאִינִי, 'let me see your appearance; and קוֹלֶךְ הִשְׁמִיעֵנִי 'let me hear your voice'. Moreover, the same adjective נָאוֶה, 'pleasant', is used in both contexts. In the Song of Songs these words are spoken by a lover addressing his beloved; in the Midrash it is God addressing Torah. Any idea that there might have been any union between God and Torah is ruled out, however, by the following section, AB 2.11, where we are told that the

adornment of Torah is on account of her betrothal to Moses. Furthermore, there is no mention of Torah having any rôle in creation which we might expect if she is being represented as God's consort. If anything our Midrash is deliberately distinguishing this feminine concept from God. Torah appears after the world has been created, and, although there is no account of her creation, she belongs to the earth that God has created to be wedded to Moses. The type of mythology where we find a sacred marriage of the gods re-emerged in Kabbalistic speculation (33), but has no place in Midrash Aleph Beth. In fact the way in which it takes the feminine Torah and places her firmly within God's creation as the consort of Moses could be taken as an example of our author's reactionary purpose (34). Torah's rôle in creation is to praise the Creator, and make herself available to participate in the rest of God's plan for the world: to be inseparately joined to God's people, Israel.

Moses is introduced into the narrative by means of a third interpretation of Gen.1:31, and this continues the theme of Torah. Moses and Torah are bound together in God's one purpose of creation: to make a people who belong to him through their complete obedience to his will (35). This relationship between Moses and Torah is allegorised and portrayed as a marriage. Moses can be understood as the object of God's declaration in Gen.1:31 by citing Ex.2:2: 'She saw him that he was good'. A similar exegesis which traces Moses' origins back to creation is found in Gen.R.4.6:

R. Levi said in the name of R. Tatum b. Hanilai: It is written, Declaring the end from the beginning (Is.46:10): From the very beginning of the world's

creation God foresaw Moses who was called, That he was good (Ex.2:2).

This last section of the chapter continues the story of Torah, describing how the pre-existent souls of the righteous, including Moses, are displayed before her. The belief that the pre-existent souls of the righteous dwell with God in the seventh heaven is found in the teaching of the third century Amoraim (36). It is clearly stated in Gen.R.8.7:

They dwelt with the King in his work (1 Chron.4:23) - with the supreme King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, sat the souls of the righteous with whom he took counsel before creating the world (37).

The last soul to appear before Torah is that of Moses, and God foretells the unique relationship that is destined to exist between the two of them. Moses is Torah's bridegroom (38), since it is he who is the means by which she is to be revealed to the world.

These last two interpretations of Gen.1:31 provide us with a link to the next chapter. In chapter 3 it is explained that the purpose of creation was to allow Israel to exist, and this, in turn, makes it possible for the Torah to be articulated in the world. In the present chapter three of the four major tenets of Judaism, according to our author, are introduced: creation, Moses and Torah. The missing one, Israel, will be introduced in the next. These four are inseparable and interdependent. The centrality of this matrix is made clear in the final chapter where Moses, the perfect Israelite, stands alone, rewarded beyond imagination in the new creation by reason of his custodianship of the Torah.

## Notes

1. See above AB 1.2 and commentary.
2. Whether God did exert any physical effort when he created the world was a question discussed by the rabbis; e.g. Gen.R.3.2, 10.9, 12.2 & 10.
3. See above pp.7-8 and notes.
4. See above pp.20-24.
5. E.g. j.Hag.2.1 (77c); b.Men.29b; Pes.Rab.21; Gen.R.12.10; the recensions of Baraita de Ma'aseh Bereshit (see N. Séd, La Mystique Cosmologique Juive, pp.76-144); recensions A and B of the Alphabet of R. Akiba.
6. See e.g. Rashi's comment on Gen.2:4.
7. Gen.R.12.10.
8. The letters themselves are of secondary importance to the author. Their importance lies only in the use made of them in scripture; see above pp.25-27.
9. Gen.10:8-9; Judg.6:12; 2 Sam.17:10; see also b.Ned.38a; b.Shab.92a; m.Ab.4.1; b.Tam.32a; b.Sot.42b.
10. E.g. Is.21:10; Jer.32:18; Ps.24.8; Neh.9:32.
11. E.g. b.Shab.87a, 88b.
12. Is.43:12; Jer.20:11; Ps.78:65; Job 16:14.
13. See e.g. m.Hag.2.1 where there is a warning against speculating on such subjects: '...Whosoever gives his mind to four things it would be better for him if he had not come into the world - what is above? what is beneath? what was beforetime? and what will be hereafter?...'
14. See below, AB 9.1 and commentary, where the verb **וָיָחַד** appears in God's judgment of Satan. The use of **וָיָחַד** here is interesting since it is used of the fleeing serpent in Job.26:13; and in Is.27:1 the fleeing serpent is identified with Leviathan - the mythical monster of the primordial waters (Job 40:25ff [Eng.41:1ff]). In his description of God rebuking the primordial waters, our author includes the subduing of



Leviathan by consciously using the verb  $\Pi\eta\eta$  whilst alluding to Ps.104.

15. Nah.1:4 is referred to in b.Hag.12a during a discussion on the creation of the world.
16. See also, Is.42:5, 48:13, 51:13,16.
17. See also, e.g., PRE 19; Deut.R.2.32; Lev.R.29.11.
18. See, e.g., 2 Enoch 3:1-21,5; 3 Bar.2:1ff; Test.of Levi 2:7-3:8.
19. See, P. Alexander, '3 Enoch', p.239.
20. Accounts of this argument can be found in b.Hag.12a; Gen.R.12.11; PRE 19.
21. This same conclusion is reached in PRE 19, and the Zohar (Gen.17b).
22. This observation becomes crucial later on in the Midrash when Satan challenges God's rôle as Creator; see below AB 8.5 and commentary.
23. E.g. SRdB and Sefer Raziel; also the long recension of SY §43. The list of the seven 'earths' is, however, quite early. It appears in ARNa, chap.37 along with the list of the seven heavens.
24. See below AB 4.5 and commentary.
25. See P. Schäfer, Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur, sections 60; 166; 241; 367; 653. In his essay, 'Sefer Yesira and the Hekhalot Literature', Hayman uses the tradition of the seal of the divine name to illustrate the independence of the short recension of SY from the Hekhalot tradition.
26. This verse is discussed by D. Sperber, 'On Sealing the Abysses', pp.168-174.
27. The magical background to this passage from Amos is mentioned by modern scholars, e.g., H. W. Wolff, Joel and Amos, p.283; R. S. Cripps, Amos, p.213.
28. See commentary on AB 1.3.
29. See below AB 17.8 and commentary.
30. E.g., b.Pes.54a; b.Ned.39b. Not only is the Torah pre-existent, it

is also the instrument of creation; see, e.g., m.Ab.3.14; Gen.R.1.1.

31. See e.g. AB 15.

32. The same interpretation can be found in m.Ab.3.14.

33. For a discussion of this mythology see R. Patai, The Hebrew Goddess.

34. See above, e.g., p.39.

35. See e.g. AB 3.3-4.

36. This tradition is discussed by Urbach, op.cit., vol.1, pp.235-242.

37. See also b.Hag.12b. More examples can be found in P. Alexander, '3 Enoch', op.cit., pp.293-294, nn.a-c.. These are given in support of a passage in 3 Enoch 43:1 which refers to the same tradition.

38. The noun יָמִין, 'bridegroom', is used in Ex.4:25-26 by Moses' wife, although in the biblical text it is not clear whether it refers to Moses or her son; see H. Kosmala, 'The Bloody Husband', pp.14-28.

## Chapter 3

3.1. Teth Yodh, Kaph Lamedh - because he carries everything beneath his arms, as it is said, And beneath the arms the world. (Deut.33:27). '...the arm the world' is not said here, but rather, '...the arms the world'. It teaches that the heavens and the heaven of heavens, and all that is in them, hang beneath (his right arm, and the earth, and all that is in it, hangs beneath) his left arm.

2. There is never sleep nor slumber before him, and he keeps the whole world in his mercy, as it is said, Behold, the Keeper of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. (Ps.121:4). But does he have nothing in the world except Israel alone? Are there not seventy nations in the world which write with seventy languages; is not the remainder of all mankind his possession and the work of his hands? So what does 'Keeper of Israel' mean? It teaches that thus the Holy Spirit said, 'I do not know anyone in the world except Israel alone'. As it is said, Only you have I known etc. (Amos 3:2).

3. I did not create my world except for the sake of Israel, as it is said, Thus says the Lord, if it was not for my covenant with day and night, I would not have set the fixed ways of heaven and earth etc. (Jer.33:25) - because they practise the Torah and fulfil the commandments. For the world does not exist except by their merit, since the reciting of the Torah does not cease from their lips for one hour. This is because the phrase 'my covenant' here means nothing other than 'Israel', as it is said, I will remember my covenant etc. (Gen.9:15).

And 'day and night' means nothing other than 'Torah', as it is said, You shall meditate upon it day and night. (Josh.1:8).

4. And I have no more precious possession in the world than Israel because except for Israel there is no satisfaction for me in the world, as it is said, And he said to me, 'You Israel are my servant, in whom I shall be glorified'. (Is.49:3).

5. Another interpretation: 'And beneath the arms the world'. How much do the arms carry under them? They carry eighteen thousand worlds which surround this world. They carry a hundred and twenty thousand worlds of the World to Come.

6. Another interpretation: 'And beneath the arms the world'. How much were the arms praised, in how many places, when they were revealed in order to perform miracles? They were praised when signs and miracles were performed in Egypt, as it is said, Behold the hand of the Lord will etc. (Ex.9:5). They were praised when he rent the sea before his children, as it is said, He caused his glorious arm to go out at the right arm of Moses. (Is.63:12). They were praised when they punished in the sea, as it is said, Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in strength etc. (Ex.15:6). They were praised when he silenced the waters of the sea until the redeemed could pass over, as it is said, By the greatness of your arm they were silent as stone. (Ex.15:16). They were praised when he cast down Yo'anai and Mamre (Pharaoh) to the lowest deep, as it is said, You stretched out your right hand etc. (Ex.15:12). They were praised when the Torah was given to Israel in the wilderness, as it is said,

From his right hand went a fiery law for them. (Deut.33:2). They were praised when he was about to punish the nations of the world, as it is said, The Lord has made bare his holy arm etc. (Is.52:11). They were praised when he was about to build the Temple, as it is said, The Temple, O Lord, which your hands have established. (Ex.15:17). They were praised when he was about to clothe Zion with strength, as it is said, Awake, Awake, put on your strength etc. (Is.52:1). They were praised when he was about to pass judgment on all the nations of the world, as it is said, My hand seized on judgment etc. (Deut.32:41).

The chapter ends.

In this chapter our author develops the theme of creation to show that it is something that is continuous, and not one completed act of God. The order of the world needs to be maintained. From the time that the newly created world was lifted up and suspended from God's heavenly dwelling place, there would be no respite for the Creator. Also in this chapter we are given an insight into the purpose of creation in the light of the belief that the world was made for the sake of Israel. Moreover, the people of Israel play an integral part in sustaining the world since their observance of the Torah provides God with the motivation to continue the work of creation.

Two pairs of letters מ"י and כ"ל provide the alphabetical framework for this chapter. The letter מ gives us the verb מען. Gen.45:17 is the only biblical occurrence of this verb where its meaning is 'to load'. In later Hebrew it can also mean 'to carry', which appears to be its meaning in our context. In AB 3.5 מען is replaced by the more common verb נסב. The object of מען is formed by the second pair of letters כל - 'he carries everything...'. When this opening phrase is placed alongside Deut.33:27, כ"ל becomes the world, the heavens and the earth.

The function of the letter י in the opening words is not immediately apparent. It is possible that it signifies the tetragrammaton, so that the letters מ"י כ"ל could be understood as follows מען יהוה כל, 'the Lord carries everything'. Another

possible explanation can be found in the inclusion of Ps.121:4 in AB 3.2 which uses the words ׀ןן, and ׀ןן, in the phrase '...the Keeper of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps'. Both forms of the verbs begin with ׀ in line with the letters that open the chapter.

The biblical phrase that dominates this chapter comes from Deut.33:27. This phrase includes the noun עולם which in its biblical context functions as an adjective describing the arms of God as 'eternal or 'everlasting'. In the Midrash, in keeping with Mishnaic Hebrew (1), it is understood as a noun meaning 'world'. A similar interpretation is found in b.Hag.12b:

Upon what does the world stand? Upon the pillars, as it is said, Who shakes the earth from her place, and her pillars tremble. Pillars upon the waters, as it is said, To him who spread out the earth upon the waters. Water upon the mountains, as it is said, Waters stood above mountains. Mountains upon wind, as it is said, For behold, he creates mountains and creates wind. Wind upon storm, as it is said, Wind, storm, does his word. Storm hangs on the arm of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is said, And beneath the arms is the world.

Midrash Aleph Beth stresses that in the biblical passage ׀ןן, 'arm', appears in the plural ׀ןן, indicating that there is something suspended beneath each arm. At this point in the ms a line of the text has been omitted by homoioteleuton when the copyist began a new page (2). The task of restoring the text is not a problem when we bear in mind the author's line of thought, and also look at parallel tradition. At the bottom of the relevant page of the ms we are told that the contents of the heavens hang beneath - and the new page begins - 'the left arm'. The new page then continues

with another discussion derived from Ps.121 without mentioning the right arm. The present state of the text is not in line with the Midrash's emphasis on the fact that in Deut.33:27 more than one arm is mentioned. The omission would seem to include material between the two phrases: '...the heavens and the heavens of heaven and all that is in them hang beneath...' and 'the left arm'. In similar interpretations, including one found in Midrash Kohen noted by Wertheimer, the heavens are suspended beneath the right arm, not the left:

R. Samuel said, 'Why is it a question of 'arms' (in the plural)? Because with his right (arm) he carries the heavens, with his left (arm) he carries the earth, as it is said, And beneath the arms is the world.' (3).

We can reconstruct our text as follows:

It teaches that the heavens and the heaven of heavens and all that is in them hang beneath his right arm. And the earth and all that is in it hang beneath his left arm.

Ps.121:4 is introduced in AB 3.2 to explain that even though the world had been brought into existence, work for the Creator does not cease. The exercise of God's mercy occupies him day and night. Two other biblical passages, besides Ps.121:4, are brought to mind by the words of AB 3.2:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end. Lam.3:22.

And:

...and his mercy is upon all that he has made.  
Ps.145:9.



The phrase שומר ישראל, 'Keeper of Israel', is interpreted in terms of God recognising Israel's supremacy over all the nations of the world: 'I do not know anyone in the world except Israel alone' (AB 3.2). It is pointed out that there are other nations in the world, who are also God's creation. This objection allows the author to prove from scripture that in fact God created the world for the sake of Israel alone. Thus the election of Israel, perhaps the major characteristic of Judaism, is shown to be embedded in God's plan of creation. Just as in the previous chapter the concepts of the Torah and Moses were shown to be integral to creation, so now the election of Israel is explained as part of the pre-ordained world order (4).

The notion of Israel's election being in God's mind at creation can be found in scripture where in Gen.1 the Sabbath, the hallmark of Israel, is instituted by God on the seventh day of creation. God declares the seventh day to be a day of rest. By resting himself on that day he expresses solidarity between himself and Israel from the beginning of time.

Amos 3:2 is cited as evidence for the unique relationship between God and Israel: 'only you have I known'; and then, in order to explain that it was for the sake of Israel that the world was created, Jer.33:25 is introduced:

Thus says the Lord, 'If I had not established my covenant with day and night, I would not have set the fixed ways of heaven and earth.

The phrase 'my covenant' is interpreted as a reference to Israel,

and the phrase 'day and night' as the Torah. The exegesis of these verses is supported by recourse to Gen.9:15 and Josh.1:8 respectively. Thus Israel and the Torah, and heaven and earth, are inseparably bound together.

Pesikta Rabbati contains an interpretation of Jer.33:25, which like our text, reads the phrase 'day and night' in terms of the Torah, but does not go to the extent of identifying 'my covenant' with Israel:

R. Eliezer b. Abuna said in the name of R. Aba, 'During all the twenty six generations (between creation and the giving of the Torah) the א kept raising a cry before the Holy One, blessed be He, saying, 'Master of the Universe, I am first of all the letters yet you did not create the world with me but with ב.' The Holy One, blessed be He, said, 'Go hence! The entire world, all of it, will be yours. For the whole world and the fullness of it were created only for the sake of Torah, as it is said, If not for my covenant (and for the Torah which is to be studied) day and night, I would not sustain the fixed ways of heaven and earth. Soon I shall give Torah to my children, and I shall inaugurate my giving it to them with you, I (אני) am the Lord your God (Ex.20:2). PR 21.

This interpretation of Jer.33:25, which understands it as a reference to the Torah alone, is the most common in Jewish literature (5). Perhaps the closest interpretation to that found in our Midrash appears in PRE 16, commenting on m.Ab.1.2:

The world rests upon three things: upon the Torah, upon Divine worship, and upon the service of loving kindness. 'Upon the Torah', how do we know this? Because it is written, If not for my covenant with day and night, I would not have set the fixed ways of heaven and earth. And it says, This book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate upon it night and day. (Josh.1:8).

This text and our own both use Jer.33:25 and Josh.1:8 in their interpretations. Our Midrash, however, offers an alternative exegesis to these superficially parallel traditions. In all the rabbinic parallels cited Jer.33:25 is used to show that the world is sustained by Torah, hence the phrase 'my covenant is equated with Torah. In the case of Midrash Aleph Beth 'my covenant' is equated with Israel, and the proof-text given for this interpretation is Gen.9:5. Josh.1:8 is then introduced to provide the proof-text for interpreting the phrase 'day and night', from Jer.33:25, to mean Torah. Thus the two concepts, Israel and Torah, are discovered side by side within Jer.33:25, instead of Torah alone which is the usual interpretation found in rabbinic exegesis. By this exegesis, our Midrash can emphasise the close relationship of mutual dependence that exists between Israel and Torah. The Torah becomes operative only when it has become the possession of Israel, and Israel can realise the unique identity of being God's own people only through observance of the Torah.

The Midrash makes it clear that, although the world was created and is sustained for the sake of Israel, the only reason for that election is that Israel manifests the Torah in the world:

For the world does not exist except by their merit, since the reciting of the Torah does not cease from their lips for one hour. AB 3.3.

It is only by Israel's constant observance of the Torah that God is satisfied with his created world, and in this way they provide the *raison d'être* for creation.

Chapter 3 contains two further interpretations of Deut.33:27. The first reflects the contents of the great universe that is suspended beneath God's arms: 'They carry 18,000 worlds which surround this world...' This speculation seems to arise from Ez.48:35: סביב שמנה עשר אלף. In the context of our Midrash, this phrase should be translated, 'around (the world) are 18,000'. In its context in Ezekiel it is part of the prophet's vision of the promised land in which God explains the structure and design of the eschatological return of the Israelites. At the centre of the vision is the new Jerusalem with a circumference, סביב, of 18,000 cubits. At the centre of the description in our text is this world, around which are 18,000 other worlds. The concept of 18,000, based on Ez.48:35, is not peculiar to Midrash Aleph Beth. For example, Seder Rabbah de Bereshit discusses the make-up of the universe at some length in terms of 18,000 worlds, interpreting the same phrase from Ezekiel (6).

AB 3.5 continues with the phrase 'they (the arms) carry 120,000 worlds of the World to Come' (7). There is no obvious biblical proof-text for this number. Sed interprets it as an allusion to the number 12, presumably multiplied by 10,000. This would again echo Ezekiel's eschatological vision of the new Jerusalem where the numbers 12, 18, and 18,000 occur. Ez.48:30-35 describes the twelve exits of the city, each representing one of the twelve tribes of Israel. The universe of the World to Come, according to our Midrash, would contain a vast multiplication of the present universe (8). This eschatological concept is already a reality. The universe of the World to Come is already being carried in the arms of God (9). The World to Come is to be the central feature of our Midrash, and

here, and in chapter 5, it appears as part of God's work in creation. By emphasising the ultimate antiquity of the idea of the World to Come, if not its actual physical existence, its reality can be set beside the reality of the present world. If this world exists, so does the World to Come. This assured articulation of the belief in a World to Come reflects the author's purpose of instilling hope in the hearts and minds of his readers despite their present experience.

The third interpretation of Deut.33:27 is a straightforward account of all the miraculous works carried out by God's arms and hands that are attested to in scripture. This final section of the chapter again emphasises the physical nature of God's involvement in the world. In the previous chapter we were told how God created the world as a human being builds a house. In this account of his miraculous and powerful interventions in Israel's history, we are given the picture of a God who is physically involved in the world, not only at its inception and creation, but also in its history: 'Behold, the Keeper of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps'.

## Notes

1. See e.g. Kutscher, op.cit., p.135.
2. See Hebrew text notes to AB 3.1.
3. Séd, op.cit., p.189, discusses this tradition in relation to SRdB, (§§467, 743, 784, 840). See also Hayman, 'Sefer Yesira and the Hekhalot Literature', op.cit., where the use of Deut.33:27 in SY is discussed with reference to SRdB and HR.
4. This belief can be found in a text as early as the Test. of Moses (see 1:12); cf PR 10.4 where we are told that the argument of the nations of the world that it was for them that the world was created will be destroyed in the time to come when only Israel will be saved.
5. E.g., b.Ned.32a; b.Pes.54a; b.Shab.33a.
6. See Séd, op.cit., pp.180ff.
7. Chap.5 mentions the 120,000 worlds of the World to Come that are yet to be created; see AB 5.9
8. In Ex.R.52.3 the existence of a multiplicity of 'worlds to come' is argued with reference to Eccl.12:5.
9. The question of whether the World to Come was created at the same time as the present world is discussed in chaps 5 and 10; see AB 5.10; 10.11 and commentary.

4.1. Mem Nun, Sadhe Ayin - a king whose Shekinah moved away to his mighty cherubim. For originally his Shekinah was on the earth, in the Garden of Eden, that was before the people of the generation of the flood had come into the world and sinned against the seven commandments. As it is said, And he drove out the man. (Gen.3:24). And when the people of the generation of the flood came into the world and transgressed against the seven commandments, and rebelled against the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is said, They said to God, 'Depart from us'. (Job:21:14). Immediately the ministering angels came and stood before the Holy One, blessed be He. And they said before him, 'Lord of the Universe, what are the sons of Adam to you, and why do you dwell with the sons of man? Did we not say to you in the beginning, "Do not create man"? But you did not take any notice of us, nor pay attention to what we said, What is man etc. (Ps.8:4)'.

2. What did the ministering angels do at that time? They each took up shofars and trumpets, and they blew the shofars, and they blew a blast on the trumpets, and they praised the Holy One, blessed be He, with songs and praises and voice, as it is said, God is to be greatly feared in the congregation of the Holy Ones. (Ps.89:7). They raised the Shekinah on high by blowing the trumpet and with the sound of the shofar, as it is said, God went up with the sound of the trumpet.(Ps.47:5).

3. As soon as the Prince of the World and all the orders of

creation saw the Shekinah on high, they put on mourning and clothed themselves with grief and sighing, as it is said, Therefore the land will mourn etc. (Hos.4:3). Immediately a Bat Kol went forth and said to them, 'The heavens are heavens for the Lord etc'. (Ps.115:16).

4. Then the heavens and the heaven of heavens rejoiced and were happy and put on garments of rejoicing and joy and were clothed in glory, rejoicing and song, and they were rejoicing greatly before the Shekinah. The sun and the moon and all the stars and the constellations were dancing before the throne of glory and before the Divine Majesty. They were telling the glory of the Shekinah of the Holy One, blessed be He, with the voice of song and praise and glory, as it is said, The heavens are telling the glory of God etc. (Ps.19:1).

5. Another interpretation: Mem Nun, Sadhe Ayin - a king whose glory moves from place to place, from house to house, from upper room to upper room, from palace to palace, from firmament to firmament because of the sin of the first man who sinned, as it is said, Your first father sinned, and your mediators transgressed against me. (Is.43:27). He broke the easy commandment which the Holy One, blessed be He, commanded, and the Shekinah fled from the Garden to Eden, as it is said, And they heard the sound of the Lord God etc. (Gen.3:8), but it says, You were in Eden, the Garden of God, and every precious stone was your covering. (Ez.28:13).

6. On account of the sin of the generation of Enosh, who worshiped idols first, the Shekinah fled from Eden to the clouds, as it is said,



He makes the clouds his chariot etc. (Ps.104:3). On account of the sin of the generation of the flood, the Shekinah fled to the heavens, as it is said, Who rides the heavens with your help etc. (Deut.33:26). On account of the sin of the generation of the division, the Shekinah fled to Shehakim, as it is said, And in his majesty is Shehakim. (Deut.33:26). On account of the sin of the men of Sodom, the Shekinah fled to Zebul, as it is said, Look down from the heavens and see from Zebul etc. (Is.63:15). On account of the sin of the generation of the wilderness, the Shekinah fled to Maon, as it is said, The Maon of the eternal God etc. (Deut.33:27). On account of the sin of the first temple the Shekinah fled to Makon, as it is said, You have made Makon for your dwelling, O, Lord, a temple etc. (Ex.15:17). On account of the sins of the people of the last temple, the Shekinah fled to Aravoth, as it is said, Extol him who rides in Aravoth, Yah is his name etc. (Ps.68:5).

7. Another Interpretation: Mem Nun, Sadhe, Ayin - a king, the glory of whose Shekinah moves from camp to camp, from the heavenly firmament to the chambers of the palace, from the chambers of the palace to the temple of majesty, from the temple of majesty to the fiery citadel, from the fiery citadel to the flaming palace, from the flaming palace to ranks of fire, from ranks of fire to camps of angels, from camps of angels to troops of hosts, from troops of hosts to hosts of attendants, from hosts of attendants to armies of marshals, from armies of marshals to camps of erelim, from camps of erelim to camps of seraphim, from camps of seraphim to the camp of ofannim, from the camp of ofannim to the camp of cherubim, from the camp of cherubim to the camp of the holy creatures, from the

camp of the holy creatures to the wheels of the chariot, from the wheels of the chariot to the throne of sapphire stone, from the throne of sapphire stone to the throne of glory, from the throne of glory to nine hundred and fifty five firmaments, and their signs are the heavens and the heaven of heavens. From the seven firmaments and upwards they have no authority, not the angels, or the marshals, or the erelim, or the seraphim, or the ofannim, or the angels, or the holy creatures, or the the wheels of the chariot, or the great princes, not even the Prince of the Presence, and the seven great Princes of the Presence, high and mighty and honoured, called by the name of Him who sits on the cherubim, because they see the face of the King and they know the secrets of the Shekinah. They have no authority to go up or to go down to the secret house of the Shekinah, but only the Holy One, blessed be He, himself, because it is his secret house and he dwells alone, in secret from them all, as it is said, He dwells in the secret place of the most high. (Ps.91:1).

The chapter ends.

In the previous chapter the Midrash explained that God constantly maintains the created world for the sake of Israel. Although the bond between God and Israel exists, the relationship that God maintains with the world is one in which he, literally, keeps the world 'at arm's length'. God is not in the world, rather it is sustained by divine power from 'outside'. When the world, or more precisely Israel, needs help it has to come about through intervention from God's dwelling place which is in heaven, not on earth. This chapter attempts to explain why God cannot exist alongside humanity on earth.

The alphabetical framework and its relationship with the chapter's contents needs little explanation. The **מ** is taken to represent 'king', which, in turn, is taken as a title for God. The letters **מ"ח** stand for the verb **ח"מ**, 'to move', and this is the verb that the Midrash uses to describe the removal of the presence of God from the world.

God is given the title 'king' not only as a convenient means of following the alphabetical structure of the text, but also because it is fitting in the context of much of the material found in the chapter. There are many references here to the praising of God which is frequently the context in which the kingship of God occurs in the Psalms, for example:

With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord. Ps.98:6.

The title 'king' is also related to the subject of experiencing the presence of God in rabbinic literature. Isaiah 33:15 and 17 are interpreted to refer to how anyone, even a gentile, who ignores their evil inclination can gain the reward of standing face to face with God:

R. Phinehas taught: What is meant by 'all flesh' (כָּל בָּשָׂר)? It means, Everyone who restrains (מְכַלְכֵּל) his evil inclination in this world earns the right to behold the Face of the Presence. This interpretation is supported by what is written: He who shuts his eyes from looking upon evil, Is.33:15. What does Scripture go on to say to such a man? Your eyes will see the King in His beauty. PR 1.3 (1).

The presence of God, the Shekinah, originally dwelt on the earth, in the Garden of Eden. The idea of the physical presence of God reflects biblical passages such as Gen.3:8:

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the cool of the day.

The removal of the Shekinah from the earth takes place in two stages according to this section of the chapter. The first stage is marked, in fact, with the removal of Adam rather than the Shekinah (4.1). Adam is banished from the Garden, and by implication, from the presence of the Shekinah, as a result of his disobedience. The Shekinah is left alone with the mighty cherubim who guard the entrance to the Garden. This reflects the biblical text to which the author of the Midrash has referred us, Gen.3:24:

He drove out the man; and at the east of the Garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

The Shekinah is still on the earth but already out of reach of human beings. The rivalry between the heavenly creatures and humankind is being anticipated since it is the cherubim that make sure that Adam and Eve can never regain direct access to God's presence.

The second stage in the Shekinah's removal occurs when the Noachide commandments are broken. God's opinion concerning the generation of the flood is given in the biblical text as follows:

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. Gen.6:5-6.

In the Midrash this is interpreted to be the breaking of the seven Noachide commandments. These commandments reflect the covenant between God and the whole of humanity. They make up all the demands of God as regards human behaviour revealed in the scriptures from the time of Adam to the beginning of the story of God's election of Israel, that is, the story of Abraham. A list of these commandments can be found in Gen.R.34.8:

The children of Noah were commanded about seven things: idolatry incest, murder, cursing the Divine Name, civil law and a limb torn from a living animal.

According to Deut.R.2.25, for example, this list parallels the commandments given to Adam precisely, the only difference being the omission of the ban on removing a limb from a living animal:

...six commandments were given to Adam: civil law,

idolatry, cursing the Divine Name, murder, incest, robbery.

The sin of the generation of the flood marks the next stage in the removal of the Shekinah from the earth. Our Midrash links the mood of that generation to the words of Job, 'They say to him, "Depart from us."' (Job 21:14). The same link can be found in Pesikta Rabbati 42.8:

I gave command to the generation of the flood, and they did not obey; instead they said, We do not need worship of Him: 'they said unto God, "Depart from us"'. (cf Mek.2.13)

The wickedness of the generation of the flood provides the ministering angels with the opportunity to berate God for the creation of humanity, and to refer back to their initial opposition to God's idea of creating humanity. The notion that the angels had any say in the creation of humanity can also be traced to a biblical text, namely Gen.1:26: 'Let us create man in our image'. The question is raised, 'To whom is God talking?' The reply given by the rabbis is that God is talking to the angels, seeking their counsel at this stage in creation. The belief that the angels were not in favour of God creating humanity is a common one found throughout rabbinic literature. For example, it is discussed extensively in Gen.R.8.3-10:

The ministering angels said to the Lord: 'Sovereign of the Universe, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, and the son of man, that you think of him?" This trouble, why has it been created?' Gen.R.8.6.

In Gen.6:6 God regrets that humanity was created:

And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.

This is alluded to in our Midrash in that it is the ministering angels who, at this point, hark back to the very notion of the creation of humanity. The role played here by the ministering angels also reflects the fact that, to some extent, they are involved in the sin of the generation of the flood. It is the **בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים**, the 'sons of God' (1a), who initiate the deeds which bring about God's repentance for having created humanity at all, and his subsequent decision to obliterate humanity from the face of the earth save for Noah and his household. The ministering angels' enthusiasm, in our Midrash, to persuade God to deprive the earth of the Shekinah and instead have it dwell with them in the heavens, perhaps reflects their horror of the sins committed by their comrades, the fallen angels who are the fathers of the generation of the flood. It would be impossible for God to dwell in the same province as that of the fallen angels.

The rivalry between humanity and the angels becomes a constant theme in Midrash Aleph Beth. By including the tradition of the angels' opposition to the creation of humanity, this rivalry is traced back to the beginning of history. Thus throughout its history humanity has had to contend with hostility in the heavens. This hostility and its fruits culminate in the judgment of Satan - who, although a rebel amongst them, still belonged to the angelic ranks - and his retinue (2). During the judgment a whole catalogue of instances when Satan accused Israel before God is recounted. Humanity, or rather the righteous remnant of Israel, is eventually triumphant. The angels do not exist in the World to Come, and the righteous replace them in enjoying the close presence of God (3).

The belief that the rebellion of the generation of the flood caused the departure of the Shekinah from the earth is an unusual one to find in rabbinic literature. The generation of the flood is more frequently set alongside other groups and individuals that together are seen to contribute to the stages in the journey of the Shekinah from earth to heaven:

...when Adam sinned the Shekinah withdrew to the first heaven, when Cain sinned to the second, in the generation of Enoch to the third, in the generation of the flood to the fourth, in the generation of the dispersion of tongues to the fifth, through the sin of the men of Sodom to the sixth, through the sin of the Egyptians to the seventh. Num.R.13.2 (4).

The tradition just referred to continues by giving seven instances of righteousness which bring the Shekinah back to dwell on the earth. In all the traditions concerning the ascents and descents of the Shekinah none regard the role of the Shekinah as static or irreversible.

In Midrash Aleph Beth it is the ministering angels who actually provide the 'power' for the elevation of the Shekinah:

What did the ministering angels do at that time. Each one took shofars and trumpets, and they blew the shofars and they blew a blast on the trumpets. And they praised the Holy One, blessed be He, with song and praise and with voice...They raised the Shekinah on high by blowing the trumpet and with the sound of the shofar... (AB 4.2)

In reaction to the removal of the Shekinah the earth goes into mourning:



As soon as the Prince of the World and all the orders of creation saw the Shekinah on high, they all put on mourning...

The title, **שר**, 'prince', is a common term for an angel. It is usually part of a genitive phrase that describes the realm of a particular angel's 'jurisdiction'. An early occurrence of this usage can be found in the biblical book of Daniel, for example, Dan.12:1:

At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people.

Jastrow describes, **שר העולם**, 'Prince of the World', as, 'the genius of the universe' (5). It is a personification of the orders of creation that acts as the representative of God's creation, or an angel prince set over the world, to speak on behalf of the world. This is clarified by a Talmudic discussion found in b.Hull.60a (6). The discussion involves Ps.104:31:

May the glory of the Lord endure for ever, may the Lord rejoice in his works (7).

These words of praise come after a prolonged thanksgiving for the wonderful works of creation. The rabbis relate that these words could not have been spoken by David since he was not present at creation, he did not see, for example, the heavens stretched out like a tent or the earth set on its foundations. The Psalm could not, in fact, have been spoken by any human being since humanity had not been created. The only beings existing at that time were angels, as can be deduced from Gen.1:26: hence the Psalm must have been uttered by an angel. Since this angel has been so closely associated with the works of creation, he is suitably entitled, 'Prince of the World' (8). In Midrash Aleph Beth, the Prince of the World, who has

witnessed the close relationship between God and creation from the moment that God decided to create the world, now witnesses the breach of that relationship as God ascends away from the earth towards heaven. Thus the mourning and grief felt at this moment of the history of creation would be most poignantly expressed in the person of the Prince of the World.

The earth is left alone and desolate without the Shekinah, but not without an explanation which is given by means of a Bat Kol, a voice from heaven, who reads from Ps.115:16:

The heavens are heavens for the Lord.

The Midrash contains an 'etc' after this reference which encourages us to look at the next phrase of the Psalm:

And he gave the earth for the sons of man.

The Bat Kol is making it clear that from this time onwards the proper dwelling place for God is the heavens, as opposed to the earth which is the dwelling place for humanity: God and humanity are separated.

This section of the Midrash ends with a vivid account of the ecstatic reception of God by all the heavens themselves as well as the sun, the moon, the stars and the constellations.

The chapter continues with another interpretation of God as King (AB 4.5). In this passage the noun 'Shekinah' is replaced in the first phrase by, **קִדְּוָה**, 'Glory'. There appears to be no significance

attached to this change since the story in this passage is simply a slight variation on the preceding one. It is another account of God's journey from the earth to the heavens as a result of the sin of humanity. In a sense this story produces a literary balance with the preceding one in that 'Shekinah' is a feminine noun, whereas 'Glory' is masculine. The text reverts to using 'Shekinah' after the first phrase, but takes a masculine form of the verb **סלל**.

The account of the journey to heaven found here is more in line with the examples from elsewhere in rabbinic literature referred to in the previous section. Adam's sin becomes the first act which prompts the removal of the Shekinah, rather than marking the removal of humanity from the presence of the Shekinah, as we were told in the previous section. This passage acts as a corrective to the previous one in that it is argued that Adam and Eve remained in the Garden and it was the Shekinah that left. Ez.28:13 acts as the proof-text:

You were in Eden, the Garden of God, and every precious stone was your covering.

Adam and Eve must have remained in the Garden after their act of disobedience because, according to Ezekiel, that is where they are when they are clothed by God and that act takes place after their act of disobedience.

This passage goes on to name each stage in the journey of the Shekinah until it has reached its final destination, that is, the seventh heaven or 'Aravoth'. The names of the seven heavens listed here correspond very closely to the list found in b.Hag.12b. There

are two differences, however, in relation to the first two names. These differences are not significant in that the names given in the Midrash, עֲבִים 'clouds' and שָׁמַיִם 'heavens', are synonymous concepts to those given in the Talmud, וִילָוֶן 'curtain' and רָקִיעַ 'firmament'. For example, in the biblical text, Gen.1:8, we read, 'And God called the firmament heaven', שָׁמַיִם.

AB 4.7 begins a third interpretation of God as King. As in the case of the previous interpretation, this stands as a explanation of what has gone before. In a sense these two further interpretations are midrashim on the Midrash, correcting and elaborating the text where necessary. The previous interpretation ended with the Shekinah in Aravoth, thus supplying information that was lacking in the chapter itself. The chapter simply told us that the Shekinah left the earth for the heavens but omitted to give any details concerning when and why each heaven was reached. Likewise this interpretation elaborates on the previous one by explaining precisely which part of Aravoth is the dwelling place of the Shekinah.

Again, as in the case of the previous interpretation, there appears to be a close connection between this passage and b.Hag.12b. Following the section discussing the names of the seven heavens, the Talmud goes into some detail concerning the nature of the seventh heaven, Aravoth. The Talmudic passage discusses the inhabitants of Aravoth and the question of whether God dwells there alone or with some particular angelic beings (9). R.Aha b.Jacob introduces the possibility of there being yet another heaven above the seventh on the basis of Ez.1:22. The discussion ends abruptly at

this point with a reference to Ben Sira 3:21-22:

Seek not what is too difficult for you, nor  
investigate what is beyond your power. Reflect  
upon what has been assigned to you, for you do  
not need what is hidden.

AB 4.7 continues the theme of the journey of the Shekinah, ending with its final destination above the seven firmaments where no being can gain entry except God alone. It does seem to agree with the idea referred to by R. Aha in the Talmud that there is a place above the seven heavens and it is there that God dwells without any of the heavenly attendants:

From the seven heavens and upwards there is no  
authority for them (to venture)...They have no  
power to go up or to go down to the secret house  
of the Shekinah.

Even the most eminent and powerful of the heavenly creatures cannot gain access to the Shekinah's house. In this context the Midrash makes reference to the Prince of the Presence and the Seven Princes of the Presence (AB 4.8). One of the earliest accounts of the angels of the Presence can be found in I Enoch 71:8ff. Enoch is recounting his journey up in to heavens, and by this time he has reached the heavenly house where God dwells:

And Michael, and Raphael, and Gabriel, and  
Phanuel, and the holy angels who are above the  
heavens, go in and out of that house.

Earlier on in the book when Enoch had arrived in the heavens (10), he had asked particularly about these angels because they stood on the four sides of God's throne, closer to God than any other creatures. These four angels become known as the 'archangels'

because they stand before the face of God as leaders of four troops of angels (11). However, again in the apocalyptic literature (12), we can find references to seven classes of angels and, consequently, references to seven archangels (13). The concept of seven archangels corresponds to our Midrash which mentions the 'Seven Princes of the Presence'.

The individual angel mentioned by the Midrash, the Prince of the Presence, could be a reference to the angel Metatron who is called the 'Prince of the Presence' in AB 7.8 (14). Metatron is one of the most popular angels in both apocalyptic and mystical literature who, according to some traditions, originally existed as the man Enoch described in the Bible, Gen.5:21-24 (15). As far as our Midrash is concerned the only significance of Metatron to note at this stage is his status in the heavenly hierarchy. The point the Midrash is making is that even the Prince of the Presence cannot gain entry to the house of the Shekinah.

This chapter began with God present in the world, walking in the same garden as humanity. By the end God is totally transcendent, above everything and apart from everything, both human and heavenly. The Shekinah had to flee from the presence of humanity because of the sin of humanity, and now dwells 'in the secret place of the most high'.

## Notes

1. For נָחַם = 'restrain', see Braude, PR, p.41, n.23.
- 1a. Commonly referred to as the 'fallen angels', the biblical basis for the legends of the fallen angels is Gen.6:1ff.
2. See AB 8.1-2; also AB 7.3-5 where the behaviour of the wicked angels Sammael and Dubbiel towards Israel is catalogued.
3. E.g., AB 13.1-3.
4. Cf, e.g., Gen.R.19.7; PR 5.72.
5. p.1627.
6. see also, b.Yeb.16b and b.San,94a.
7. Rashi's commentary on this discussion in the Talmud points out that this angel cannot be Metatron since prior to his angelic office Metatron was a man, namely Enoch, and therefore could not have witnessed the works of creation.
8. The 'Prince of the World' is discussed by P. Alexander, '3 Enoch', op.cit., p.243, in the context of the 'heavenly household'. He notes that in 3 Enoch 3:2, 10:3 Metatron fulfils the same functions, whereas in, e.g., PRE 27 Michael is regarded as the Prince of the World.
9. SRdB §34-45 contains one of the closest parallels to the list of inhabitants of Aravoth in Midrash Aleph Beth.
10. 1 Enoch 40:1ff.
11. see PRE 4.
12. 1 Enoch 61:10ff.
13. E.g.1 Enoch 21, and Test. Levi 8.
14. The title, 'Angel of the Presence', originally occurs in the biblical text, Is.63:9, the identification of Metatron with the Prince of the presence can be found , e.g., b.San.38b.
15. For a concise account of Metatron in early Jewish literature see P. Alexander, '3 Enoch', op.cit., pp.243-244.

## Chapter 5

5.1. Pe Sadhe, Qoph Resh - Because his mouth has commanded and his attendants have been created, as it is said, For he spoke and it was etc. (Ps.33:9). There have been new things created, new things each and every day, as it is said, New every morning etc. (Lam.3:23).

2. How does the Holy One, blessed be He, create his attendants? He speaks his word and his temple is filled with fire, and rows and rows stand opposite the throne of glory. The Holy One, blessed be He, has formed with his little finger the features of the faces of every angel and every prince. After that he has blown into them spirit and breath, and placed them upon their feet, and opened their eyes. And whenever they see the throne of glory, fear of the Shekinah falls upon them and they fall upon their faces and say, There is none like you among the gods, O Lord etc. (Ps.86:8).

3. Qoph Resh - Because he calls all of them and they stand before him. Each one he names according to their work, and he appoints each one to their work. This one he appoints over the service of song, to be called the angel of song; this one he appoints over the service of praise, to be called the angel of praise; this one he appoints over the service of the throne, to be called the angel of attendance on the throne; this one he appoints over the service of the wind, to be called the angel of wind; this one he appoints over the service of fire, to be called the angel of fire; this one he appoints over the service of rain, to be called the angel of rain;



this one he appoints over the service of dew, to be called the angel of dew; this one he appoints over the service of thunder, to be called the angel of thunder; this one he appoints over the service of hail, to be called the angel of hail.

4. Afterwards he threw his fear upon them so that they would not transgress the law, as it is said, He established them for ever and ever etc. (Ps.148:6).

5. Another interpretation - Pe Sadhe, Qoph Resh - Because he splits and rends and tears apart heaven and earth one on top of the other beneath his two arms. He ruined the whole world in one moment, as it is said, For his anger is in a moment, life is in his favour etc. (Ps.30:6).

6. Nothing was left of them except the throne of glory alone and the Holy One, blessed be He, dwelling upon it in his glory, on his own, as it is said, The Lord alone will be lifted high on that day. (Is.2:11). What is 'alone'? Even the living creatures who are in the chariot and the ofannim and the cherubim and the wheels and the seraphim, marshals and angels come to an end with them, as it is said, No one can rescue from my hand. (Deut.32:39).

7. Why did the Holy One, blessed be He, not leave the holy creatures who were in the chariot, and the ofannim and the seraphim and the cherubim and the wheels and the marshals and the angels who stand to wait upon him and to wait upon his glory? - So that not one of all those who stand before him in service have the opportunity to open

their mouths to say, 'We, we created the new things of the world with the Holy One, blessed be He.' As it is said, I, I have made and I will bear. (Is.46:4). 'I have made' - the world, 'I will bear' - the generations of the world. I can face utterly destroying the world, I can escape from all the world. That day will be a thousand years in the time of the sons of men, as it is said, For a thousand years in your sight etc. (Ps.90:4).

8. From the morning until the evening the Holy One, blessed be He, pondered upon the throne of glory, and considered deeply new thoughts, desirable plans, as it is said, The counsel of the Lord stands for ever etc. (Ps.33:11). And he pondered every new thing in the thoughts of his heart two hundred and forty eight times: How will I create the deeps? How will I create the heights? How will I create the pillars of the clouds? How will I create the foundations of the world? How will I create the seven (pillars) of the earth? How will I create the orders of heaven? He finished them, each word and every thought in the deepest thoughts of his mind with his great wisdom of knowledge, as it is said, For the Lord is a God of Knowledge etc. (I Sam.2:3). And it says, Your thoughts are very deep. (Ps.92:5).

9. From evening until morning he goes down from the throne of glory and rides upon the sparks of fire and arranges the orders of the new worlds with his fingers. The upper orders he positions opposite the lower orders, and the lower orders opposite the upper orders, until he has finished a hundred and twenty thousand worlds: a hundred and twenty thousand firmaments, a hundred and twenty

thousand earths, as it is said, How great are your works etc.  
(Ps.92:5). And it says, For since the beginning of the world men have  
not heard, or perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen etc.  
(Is.64:4). Not 'he made', rather it is said, 'he will make'. He called  
them in the morning and stood them in the world, and they come and  
stand before him, as it is said, For as the new heavens etc.  
(Is.66:22).

The chapter ends.

Chapter four described the ascent of the divine presence to the heavens away from the earth, the province of humankind. This chapter continues with the theme of the heavens by discussing the creation of their inhabitants: the angels. There is a close relationship between this chapter and chapter two since both seem concerned with the physical and mental processes experienced by God during the work of creation. The chapter is divided into two parts, each based on the four letters פ"ץ ק"ך that form the alphabetical framework. The first part, (AB 5.1-4), describes the creation of the heavenly creatures, and their commissioning by God for their varied tasks. The second part, (AB 5.5-9), moves the discussion from the subject of the present world's creation to the creation of the World to Come. The method for arranging the material used here differs from that found in previous chapters in that, in the first part, the two pairs of letters are dealt with separately. The first pair of letters, פ and צ, represent the words פִּי, 'his mouth' and צִוָּה, 'commanded' respectively. The explanation of the second pair of letters does not occur until after the full interpretation of the first pair. The second pair, ק and כ, represent only one word, the verb קָרָא, 'to call'. In the second part of the chapter all four letters are taken together to produce the words, פּוֹצֵעַ וְקוֹרֵי, 'splits and rends'.

The first part of the chapter describes the creation of the creatures that are to be in attendance around the heavenly throne. The biblical text that functions as an introduction is from Psalm 33:

'For he spoke and it was etc.' The Psalm, as a whole, underlines the transcendent power of God. This is achieved by referring to God's work of ordering the primeval waters and creating the heavens from which he now looks down upon the earth. The phrase quoted by our Midrash concludes a section on the creation of the heavens and their contents:

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,  
and all their host by the breath of his mouth. He  
gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle; he  
put the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth  
fear the Lord, let all the inhabitants of the world  
stand in awe of him! For he spoke, and it came to  
be; he commanded and it stood forth. Ps.33:6-9.

Thus the biblical text returns us to the context of creation.

The discussion of the creation of angels is close to a passage from b.Hag.14a which uses the same biblical proof-texts:

Samuel said to R. Hiyya b. Rab: 'O son of a lion, come I will tell you something from those excellent things that your father said. Every day ministering angels are created from the fiery stream, and sing, then cease to be, as it is said, They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.' But he differs from R. Samuel b. Nahmani, for R. Samuel b. Nahmani said that R. Jonathan said, 'From every utterance that goes forth from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He, an angel is created, as it is said, By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all their host by the breath of his mouth.'

This section of the Talmud comprises material on the make-up of the heavens and their inhabitants as part of its commentary on the prohibition against expounding the chariot chapters of Ezekiel. In the process much of the most popular speculation concerning heavenly

matters is referred to and discussed. In the passage quoted above two opinions are given: firstly, that angels are created at the beginning of every day, and, secondly, that angels are created every time God speaks. Our Midrash alludes to both opinions by quoting both passages of scripture, and the two are harmonised:

His mouth has commanded and his attendants have been created, as it is said, For he spoke and it was etc. There have been new things created, new things each and every day, as it is said, New every morning etc. AB 5.1 (1).

As in the case of the Talmudic discussion, our Midrash sees the creation of angels to be an act repeated daily. If we turn to Genesis Rabbah on this same point we find further clarification. In this passage the rabbis are commenting on the phrase in Gen.32:27, 'Let me go for the day is breaking'. It is spoken by the angel who wrestles with Jacob. It is seen to be relevant to the subject of the creation of angels since it would seem to imply that angels exist to see more than one day breaking, that is to say, they live longer than only one day. This would stand against the usual interpretation of Lam.3:23, 'New Every morning...':

R.Samuel b. Nahmani said in R. Jonathan's name, 'A celestial company never repeats praises.' R. Helbo said, 'The Holy One, blessed be He, creates a new company of angels every day, and they sing before him and then depart. R. Berekiah observed, 'I objected to R. Helbo, "But it is written, And he said, 'Let me go, for the day is breaking'" But he retorted, "...This was Michael or Gabriel, who are celestial princes; all others are exchanged, but they are not exchanged. Gen.R.78.1.

Thus, although new companies of angels are created each day, they

are to be distinguished from the major princes of heaven, in particular Michael and Gabriel.

The daily work of creating the hosts of angels, as it is described in our Midrash, consists of three distinct phases. Firstly, God speaks and the ranks of heavenly attendants are lined up opposite the throne of glory. Secondly, each of them is individually formed by the finger of God. Thirdly, God breathes into each of them spirit and breath, sets them on their feet, and opens their eyes. The heavenly beings are now created and their first response is to praise the figure seated upon the throne of glory.

When we look closely at this passage from the Midrash it becomes apparent that the angels's creation is modelled upon the account of humanity's creation found in the first three chapters of Genesis. In Genesis the creation of humanity could be said to occur in three stages. And these stages take us from God's initial decision to create humanity, to the point where Adam and Eve leave the Garden of Eden as human beings responsible for their own destinies.

The initial stage in the creation of the angels is characterised by the effectiveness of God's word. The ranks of angels are conjured up when God opens his mouth. This is equivalent to Gen.1:26, 'Then God said let us make man...'. At this stage in the Genesis account no details are given about the physical make-up or the animation of humanity, hence it could be assumed that, as yet, these were not present. Humanity is little more than an idea in the mind of God.

In the account of the angels' creation in our Midrash the second stage is characterised by the creation of the physical shape, or body, of each individual being. The second stage in the creation of humanity in the Genesis account is the story of Adam's creation from dust from the ground, and then Eve's creation from Adam's rib. The author's use of the verb, צור, in the context of creation is reminiscent of Jer.1:5 where the same verb is used to describe God's 'creation' of the prophet himself, 'Before I formed you (אצורך) in the womb I knew you...'. Both the accounts in Genesis and our Midrash contain the concept of individual care and attention given by God to the creatures he is creating. In Genesis God acts as a potter (יוצר) moulding the shape of Adam's body out of clay. In our Midrash God acts as an artist (צייר) painting or sculpting the features of each angel's face with his little finger.

The third stage is the animation of the angels. God breathes into them spirit and breath, stands them on their feet, and opens their eyes. In Genesis, likewise, Adam has the breath of life breathed into his nostrils by God as part of the final stage in his creation. There is irony, however, in the fact that in Genesis the eyes of Adam and Eve are opened only after they have disobeyed God and eaten the forbidden fruit. Humanity's eyes are opened by Satan, but the angels' eyes are opened by God.

In AB 5.3 the second pair of letters, ק"ך, from the alphabetical framework are introduced and are taken to refer to the verb קרא, 'to call'. In this next stage of the angels' creation when God calls



them together, and names them, their names reflect the specific task or job that each individual angel is given to perform.

Our Midrash specifies nine areas of responsibility given to the angels: song, praise, the throne, wind, fire, rain, dew, thunder, and hail. There are many traditions concerning the precise number of orders of angels in both Jewish and Christian literature, and these vary not only in number, but also in description, depending on the cosmology of the writer. For example, the number of heavens can decide the number of angelic orders (2). Whether the tasks referred to in our text are supposed to be understood as nine precise categories of angels is not at all clear. There is a tradition referring to nine orders of angels, but it is uncommon (3). Since at this stage the Midrash is not discussing the number of the angelic orders, perhaps the use of nine is not significant.

The angels' tasks fall into two categories: those concerned with heaven and the Divine Presence - song, praise, and attendance on the throne; and those concerned with earth and the elemental powers - wind, fire, rain, dew, thunder, and hail. Perhaps the key to understanding this combination of heavenly and earthly is to be found in Psalm 148 which is quoted, in part, at the end of the section. The Psalm, in celebration of God's creation, begins with the praise of the heavenly hosts:

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights! Praise him all his angels, praise him all his host. Praise him sun and moon, praise him all you shining stars! Praise him you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord! For he

commanded and they were created. And he established them for ever and ever; he has given a statute and it will not be transgressed. vss.1-6.

And it continues with a call to the earth to praise God:

Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!... vss.7-8.

According to the evidence of rabbinic literature, this Psalm appears to have been popular amongst those who speculated on cosmological matters, that is to say, those involved in discussing Ma'aseh Merkabah and Ma'aseh Bereshit (4). For example, in the Babylonian Talmud account of R. Johanan b. Zakkai and R. Eleazar b. Arak's vision of the Divine Chariot, the trees beside them react to what is taking place by praising God with the words of this Psalm (5). Furthermore, in the context of Ma'aseh Bereshit, this Psalm is used in a discussion concerning Adam's creation in Gen.R.8.1. The fact that the Psalm states that the heavens and the earth praise God before there is any mention of humanity is taken by R.Samuel b. R. Tanhum as proof that Adam did not exist in any form until the end of the sixth day of creation (6).

In the previous chapter we were told that, as a result of Adam's transgression, the Shekinah had to leave the earth and reside in the heavens. Now we are told why it is that the Shekinah can exist eternally in the presence of angels: '...he threw his fear upon them so that they would not transgress the law.' It would appear that the ministering angels were not endowed with the same type of free-will that had been granted to humanity. It is interesting to note that the word used for 'law' here is the Aramaic ܢܗܐ, a very broad term,

incorporating the whole of what we mean by 'religion' (7). By using this term the angels are depicted as if they are 'programmed' at their creation to be perfect in every detail in their relationship with God. This is not borne out by the traditions concerning the 'fallen angels' based on Gen.6:2. Although these traditions are not directly alluded to in Midrash Aleph Beth, it does contain plenty of material concerning another angel, Satan who, along with his accomplices Sammael and Dubbiel, challenges God's supremacy and authority (8).

In the second part of this chapter (AB 5.5-10) the letters פ"ץ introduce the words פוציע וקוריע, 'he splits and rends'. The scene changes dramatically from God's intricate and caring work in creation to the devastating work he displays in its destruction.

In chapter three we were told that the heavens and the earth were suspended and sustained beneath God's arms. Now we are told that the same arms rip them up and nothing is to escape God's destructive force. This is because it is the first stage in God's new creation plan. Every being is destroyed so that all that is left is God and the throne of glory. Then the new creation will be the work of God alone without any angelic advisors or helpers.

It would appear at first sight that there has been an abrupt change in subject matter here: it has moved abruptly from creation to eschatology. However, when we realise that this chapter, and the previous chapters, are not so much concerned with the continuous story of world history as with the dynamic, creative work of God,

then we can recognise a link. The details concerning events in heaven and on earth that lead to the destruction of the old world and the creation of the new, for example, the work of Satan, his destruction and the messianic age, belong to a different context, and are dealt with in the second part of the Midrash, 'The Tractate of Satan'. The first part, chapters one to six, concern God's creation, which includes the new world as well as the old.

As well as containing many direct quotations, this section is full of allusions to the biblical text. One biblical verse partly quoted is Deut.32:39, No one can rescue from his hand, When we look at the whole verse we find that it epitomises the character of God depicted in this section of the Midrash:

See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god  
beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I  
heal...

God is by himself, and he creates as well as destroys. The picture of destruction followed by renewal is echoed in Hos.6:1:

Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn  
that he may heal us.

The verb to tear, **שָׁרַף**, used in this verse is the same as that used in the Midrash:

...he splits and rends and tears apart  
(**וּשְׁרַף**) heaven and earth...

The English translation, 'tear', is weak when we consider that this verb describes the action of a wild beast ripping up its victim (9).

This act of cosmic destruction, in biblical terminology 'the day of

the Lord', although lasting only a day in God's time-scale, lasts for a thousand years in human terms. The idea of a lengthy period of time for the eschaton is one of the main characteristics of apocalyptic literature, for example, 4 Ezra, the Book of Revelation, and 1 Enoch. The events occurring during this time are described vividly in the Tractate of Satan.

Our Midrash stresses the point that the heavens as well as the earth are to be totally destroyed: '...he tears heaven and earth one upon the back of the other'. The picture is presented of heaven and earth being torn up in God's hands as a human being might rip up a piece of paper. When it comes to destroying the world, the divine characteristics that are displayed, those of strength and power, are the ones that were in evidence at creation:

He stood with his power like a mighty man, he took his position, firm in his might, to create all his world by his will. AB 2.1.

By totally destroying the heavens and all their contents God is left totally alone. Nothing exists except God. Once the destruction is complete God alone can begin planning the new creation. The intricate work of planning and shaping will belong solely to God. The result will be two-fold: first, God alone can be praised for this creation, and secondly, creation will be perfect. By stressing that God will create the new world totally by himself, the author is anticipating a later chapter where Satan claims to have been God's partner in creation. This claim is refuted in relation to the present world, but, with it in mind, the way in which the World to Come is created leaves no room for it even to be raised (10). We know that

angels were present when humanity was created (11), but there will be no trace of them when God creates a second time.

The most striking biblical parallel to this stressing of God's unaccompanied work in creation, albeit in reference to the present world, is Is.40:12ff:

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as his counsellor has instructed him?

As in previous chapters, the physical and mental work involved in creation is described in vivid anthropomorphic terms:

From morning until evening the Holy One, blessed be He, planned upon the throne of glory and deepened new thoughts...he pondered over every new thing in the thoughts of his heart two hundred and forty eight times...From evening until morning he goes down from the throne of glory and rides upon the sparks of fire and arranges the orders of the new worlds with his fingers.

During the day creation is planned in God's mind, and at night things are created by God's hand. As we were told in chapter three, 'The Keeper of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps' (12). The creator's work continues until one hundred and twenty thousand worlds have been created. These worlds consist of a hundred and twenty thousand firmaments and a hundred and twenty thousand earths. This number is consistent with the reference to the future worlds made in chapter three (13). According to chapter three, the future worlds were created at the same time as the present world and were suspended beneath the arms of God. Here that idea is

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contradicted. Is.64:4 is referred to:

For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, or perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen, O God, beside you, what he will make for him who waits for him.

And is interpreted as follows:

Not 'he has made', rather it is said, 'he will make'. He called them in the morning and stood them in the world, and they came and stood before him, as it is said, For as the new heavens (and the new ~~earth~~ which I shall make stand before me) AB 5.10.

In this chapter our author prefers to regard the act of creation as sequential; the world to come being created after the failure of the present world. On a deeper level, this reflects a rejection of the belief that the failure of the present world was an inherent feature of God's creation plan. By describing the new creation as something which happens after the destruction of the present world, the writer is allowing for the possibility that the present world need not have become subject to God's judgment. Furthermore, by presenting God as the all-powerful creator, not only of this world, but also the next, it offers hope to the author's contemporaries who may be suffering in the present world, or even doubting God's omnipotence. This theme becomes dominant from chapter 13 onwards when the author <sup>moves</sup> his narrative into the context of the World to Come.



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## Notes

1. Urbach, op.cit., vol.1, pp.181-2, refers to this tradition about the one-day life-span for angels, and concludes that its earliest written formulation is found in Justin Martyr, *Dial.*, 128,3-4, dating from the first half of the 2nd century.
2. Test. Levi.3 describes seven heavens and each order of angels that inhabit them, from the angels of the Presence in the seventh heaven to the lower orders which have to deal with the sin and judgment of humanity. Likewise, 1 Enoch 61.10 has seven orders to correspond to the seven archangels as well as the seven heavens. Although the text is unclear at this point, 2 Enoch 20.3 seems to mention ten heavens and, correspondingly, ten orders of angels. In later literature, e.g. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah* (S. 1), and the *Zohar*, II,43a, ten is the usual number.
3. Reference is made to nine orders of angels in one ms of 2 Enoch 20.3, see Anderson, '2 Enoch', in Charlesworth, pp.134-135. The rest of the textual evidence prefers ten, (see n.2 above).
4. On this type of speculation see, e.g., G. Scholem, Major Trends, I. Gruenwald, Apocalyptic and Merkabah Mysticism, D. J. Halperin, The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature.
5. b.Hag.14b; for a full discussion of this account and other versions of the vision see, D. J. Halperin, op.cit., pp.107-140, and C.C. Rowland, The Open Heaven, pp.282-305.
6. The alternative view in this argument is that the soul of Adam already existed and is referred to in either Gen.1:2 or 1:24.
7. For example, it is used in the context of religious conversion, *המירה דתה*, 'she changed her faith', b.Succ.56b.
8. See AB 7,8, and 9.
9. For example, the verb is used in Gen.37:33 to describe the fabricated fate of Joseph.
10. See AB 8.5 and commentary.
11. See AB 4.1
12. Ps.121:4; see AB 3.2.
13. AB 3.5.

6.1 Shin Tav - Because of the praise of his works, for he is going to make the appearance of the new heavens like the appearance of the sun; the appearance of the new earth like the appearance of the moon; the appearance of the fruit of the trees of the field like the appearance of the stars; and the appearance of the fruits of the earth like the appearance of the constellations, and their scent [will be] sweet like the scent of the Garden of Eden. They are all designated for the righteous in the time to come, as it is said, How great is your goodness etc. (Ps.31:20).

2. Another interpretation: Because he is going to put into the World to Come each individual grain of wheat, and each individual ear of barley so that there will be from every single one 22 measures of flour consisting of two donkey loads. For this is the symbolic value in gematria of 'wheat' .

3. Another interpretation: Because he is going to put into the World to Come each individual grape so that there will come out of every single one 127 kegs of wine. For this is the symbolic value of 'grape'.

4. Another interpretation: Because he is going to put into the World to Come each individual fig so that (from every single one) there will be 456 measures consisting of a 'bird-measure'. For this is the symbolic of 'fig'.

5. Another interpretation: Because he is going to put into the World

to come each individual olive so that there will be 417 logs of oil coming out of every single one. For this is the symbolic value of 'olive'.

6. Another interpretation: Because he is going to put into the World to Come each individual date so that there will be 640 flasks of strong drink coming out of every single one. For this is the symbolic value of 'date'.

7. Another interpretation: Because he is going to put into the World to Come each individual apple so that there will be, to come out of every single one, 494. For this is the symbolic value of 'apple'.

8. Another interpretation: Because he is going to put into the World to Come each individual nut so that there will be 17 measures of nut-pulp to come out of every single one. For this is the symbolic value of 'nut'.

9. Another interpretation: Because it will be that [he is going to put into the World to Come] each individual tree [from] which will come fruit for the future time, as it is said, The earth will yield her produce. (Lev.26:4)

10. Another interpretation: Because he is going to put into the time to come rivers of wine, rivers and rivers of oil, rivers and rivers of honey, rivers and rivers of delicacies, rivers and rivers of sweet things, rivers and rivers of pure balm, and all the mountains dripping new wine, and all the hills honey and milk, as it is said, And

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it will happen in that day mountains will drip down new wine etc.

(Joel 3:18).

11. And why all these? They are the reward of the righteous in the World to Come, as it is said, The righteous will rejoice, and exult before God and be jubilant with joy. (Ps.68:4).

The chapter ends.

In AB 5.5 the author moved the discussion from the creation of the present world to the creation of the World to Come. Chapter six continues with details concerning the richness and abundance of the new world. The Midrash tells us that this future utopia is the just reward of the righteous.

This chapter's structure differs from the other chapters in that it contains ten interpretations of the letters ׀ׁׂ - the last two letters of the alphabet. These letters form the third person masculine perfect of the verb ׀ׁׂ, 'to put', and they appear throughout the chapter in the form of the infinitive ׀ׁׂ׃. In line with the speculation found in the previous chapter, it is made clear that God alone is in full control of all things pertaining to the new world. First what is to be included is decided and designed, and then God puts it into the new world.

The chapter begins with the external appearance of the World to Come. The appearance of the new heavens and the new earth is to be transformed into that of the luminaries of the sky. The heavens will now appear like the sun, and the earth like the moon. Also, the produce of the earth will be transformed to look like things celestial: the fruit of the trees of the field are to resemble the stars, and the fruits of the earth the constellations. It is not only their appearance that is to be transformed, they are to be sweet and their scent is to be like the produce of the Garden of Eden. The splendours of the World to Come, in particular the produce of the

new earth, have been created to reward the righteous, who will be the inheritors of this new world. The last part of this section, which begins to describe the contents of the new earth, seems to prompt the subject matter of the interpretations that follow. They continue the idea by speculating on the great yields to be harvested in the World to Come.

The nearest biblical parallel to the description of the changing appearance of the heavens and the earth for the benefit of the righteous would seem to be Dan.12:3. The passage occurs as part of a description of the rewards for the righteous who will be raised from the dead in the World to Come:

And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, (ומצדיקי) like the stars (ככוכבים) for ever לעולם and ever.

Although it is by no means an exact parallel it does contain similar language, for example, צדיקים, כוכבים and עולם in the sense of 'world'. Another biblical passage which shows a faint similarity to our text is Is.30:26. As in the case of the Daniel passage, this verse comes in an eschatological context which is concerned with the rewards at the end time rather than the punishments:

...the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day when the Lord binds up the hurt of his people, and heals the wounds inflicted by his blow.

In the biblical passage the sun and the moon are to be transformed for the benefit of the new earth, giving it light in

abundance. Our Midrash seems to take this speculation a step further by saying that the new heavens will be like the sun and the new earth like the moon. The earth will have the whole of its heavenly firmament shining like the sun and it will itself radiate light like the light of the moon (1).

It is not only the outward appearance of the new earth's produce that is to be transformed but also its taste and smell. It will be sweet, and its scent will be like the fruit of the Garden of Eden. The use of the imagery of the Garden of Eden in the context of the World to Come is a common one since the Genesis story of Eden provides a vision of what God understands to be good. Thus it is a prototype of the idealised World to Come (2).

One of the closest parallels to the Garden of Eden imagery used here is found in the appendix to 3 Enoch:

In the midst of the garden they (the winds) mingle and blow from one side to the other. They become fragrant from the perfumes of the garden and from the spices of Eden, until scattering, saturated with the scent of pure perfume, they bring the scent of the spices of the garden and the perfumes of Eden before the righteous and the godly who shall inherit the garden of Eden and the tree of life in time to come. 3 Enoch 23.18.

This passage ends by quoting from the Song of Songs 4:16 which is probably the same text that underlies our Midrash at this point. The reference to 'My beloved' is interpreted as the righteous since, in both our Midrash and 3 Enoch, it is the righteous who enjoy the fruits of the garden in the World to Come:

Awake, O north wind, and come, O south wind! Blow upon my garden, let its fragrance be wafted



abroad. Let my beloved come to his garden, and eat its choicest fruits. (3)

The words מִתּוֹק and פֶּיךָ do occur frequently in the Song of Songs and, as we shall see, that biblical text does seem to provide the author of the Midrash with much of this chapter's language. Its rich use of nature language provides perfect images for someone wishing to give a vivid description of Paradise.

Another interesting reference to the sweet fragrance of the food prepared for the righteous in the World to Come, which also uses Song of Songs 4:16, is found in Ex.R.13.2:

In the hereafter the Holy One, blessed be He, will prepare a feast for the righteous in the Garden of Eden, and there will be no need either of balsam or of choice spices, for the north wind and the south wind will sweep through and sprinkle about all the perfumes of the Garden of Eden, and they will exhale their fragrance.

The main text of the chapter ends with a quotation from Ps.31:19: 'How great is your goodness etc.', the biblical text continues: 'which you have stored up for those who fear you'. According to the biblical text, goodness in the sight of God is identified with what God created in the Garden of Eden. After each day of creation, God looked at the product of the day's work and declared it to be good (4).

Since the following interpretations to this chapter, AB 6.2-10, all follow the same pattern and all are of the same short length, they are best discussed together as one section. They take up the subject of the food and drink prepared by God for the righteous in

the World to Come. In AB 6.1 we are told that the fruit of the trees of the field and the fruits of the earth are to be transformed in appearance and their taste and smell are to be like the Garden of Eden. These interpretations explain the meaning of these comments by describing specific examples of the eschatological produce.

The second interpretation, AB 6.2, describes the wheat and barley crops of the World to Come. In each of these interpretations the emphasis is placed on God personally planting the food for the righteous. God is responsible for each grain of wheat, each ear of barley, each grape, each tree etc.. This displays continuity with the previous chapter which laid such emphasis on the idea that God alone will be the creator of the World to Come. This interpretation gives us a vivid picture of God involved in every detail of providing for the righteous, even to the extent of planting each individual seed that will eventually produce their flour.

The biblical text that provides the foundation for the speculation found in these interpretations is probably the description of the promised land in Deut.8:

For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey.  
Deut.8:7-8. (5).

This is not an exact parallel. Like the Deuteronomy passage, he mentions wheat and barley, figs and olives in the same order, but

he omits pomegranates and adds dates, apples and nuts. Clearly the emphasis in the Midrash is on individual pieces of fruit rather than trees, and this explains why, instead of using the word for vine, יָפֵל, he uses the word for grape עֲנַבִּי. Again, this achieves the aim of portraying the minute and individual work of God in providing for the righteous in the World to Come. Also, by laying stress on the fruit, rather than the trees that bear it, these interpretations remain true to the opening one which stated that the sweet fruits of the new earth are designated for the righteous (6).

Each of the first seven interpretations follow precisely the same pattern and end with an example of gematria. The word gematria itself is used in AB 6.2: 'For their symbolic value in gematria is twenty two.' The word סִימָנְהוּן is Aramaic which would seem to imply that the writer is quoting a familiar formula (7). There does not appear to be anything mysterious about the gematria used here. The value of the letters of the type of vegetation being described in each passage is added together and the total simply gives the amount of produce that can be harvested. For example, the letters of the noun meaning 'a grape' עֲנַבִּי, have a total value of one hundred and twenty seven; this means that each grape will produce one hundred and twenty seven kegs of wine.

By referring to gematria in these passages the creative role of the alphabet seems to be implied. The letters of the alphabet provide the underlying law of nature for the World to Come. Their symbolic value, in relation to the name of each species of fruit,

governs the amount of food or drink that can be harvested. This tendency to give the alphabet an active part in creation is common in Midrashic literature, the most sophisticated example being Sepher Yesira (8). It is interesting to note that the gematric value of the first of the fruits (AB 6.2) is twenty two which is, of course, the total number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

The final two interpretations, together, form a conclusion to the chapter with appropriate biblical quotations. The first contains certain syntactical problems (9), but if the text reads as it is conjectured in the translation, then it would seem to be a conclusion to these successive interpretations section. Examples have been given of the type of harvest to be expected in the World to Come: in conclusion we are told that each and every tree that will bear fruit has been planted by the hand of God, thus fulfilling the words: The earth will yield her produce (Lev.26:4). The Leviticus passage in its biblical context describes the benefits that are awaiting the Israelites who keep the commandments in the promised land. As in the case of Deut.8:7-8, we can see that this has become a prophecy concerning the World to Come. It is also reminiscent of Ez.47:12-13:

And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.

The prophecy is eschatological in its biblical context. It occurs as part of Ezekiel's vision of the new temple, and its main concern is a mythical river, which is to appear at the end time, flowing from the

new city of Jerusalem to the Dead Sea. The verses quoted are part of a description which details how the Dead Sea will be transformed from a sea of barren and stagnant waters into a sea full of fish with banks rich in vegetation.

The final interpretation, AB 6.10, moves on to describe the new rivers and mountains from which will flow wine, oil, honey, milk, delicacies and sweet things in the World to Come. Whilst the crops and the trees in the previous passages will provide rich harvests, these rivers conjure up even greater abundance. Their contents are constantly flowing and will always be readily accessible to any of the righteous in the new world. The reference to milk and honey, again, is reminiscent of the biblical concept of the promised land (10). The passage from Joel which is quoted here, and which forms the scriptural basis for the text, is eschatological in its biblical context:

And in that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk. (Joel 3:18).

The chapter ends by making the same point that was made at the end of the first interpretation, AB 6.1: all these wonderful things are put into the World to Come as the reward for the righteous.

It is unusual to find such a detailed account of the rewards prepared for the righteous in the World to Come. The more common response in rabbinic texts to speculation concerning this subject is to refer to Is.64:3, 'Eye hath not seen...'. To include such details here, and elsewhere in the text (11), gives us some indication of the

author's context (12). We are presented with a rich and wonderful picture of paradise, which can only encourage faith in God and hope for the future in a present situation that stands in stark contrast beside it.

1. A comment on the importance of light as a characteristic of the World to Come is found in Ex.R.15.27: 'Just as the moon shows itself both by day and night, so do Israel rule both in this world and the World to Come; and just as the moon is of light, so will Israel inherit light, as it is said: Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. (Ps.97:11); and also: Arise shine for thy light is come. (Is.60:1)'.
2. 4 Ezra 8:51-2 reflects the idea of an eschatological Garden of Eden: '...Paradise is opened, the tree of life is planted, the age to come is prepared, plenty is prepared, plenty is provided, a city is built, rest is appointed, goodness is established, and wisdom perfected beforehand'. See also Test.of Levi.18:9-11.
3. Song.2:3, '...and his fruit (ופריו) was sweet (מתוק) to my taste', comp. AB 11.
4. Gen.1-2:4.
5. The biblical idea of a promised land becomes a prophecy for the World to Come, and this passage becomes a prophetic description of the World to Come; see e.g. Gen.R.48.10; Ex.R.35.8 (this passage includes also a reference to Ps.31:20, the verse quoted in AB 6.1); Num.R.14.2; Midr.Ps.94.2..
6. The stress on the fruits of the new age seems to allude to Gen.1: 11: 'And God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind upon the earth.' The following verse (Gen.1:12) can also be seen to be influencing the Midrash in that the verb used to describe the earth producing fruit is יצא, which is used in each interpretation that describes the produce of the World to Come.
7. In SY מִן is used but not with gematria. In §22 and §48 it is used in relation to the number 22, cf AB 6.2.
8. See commentary on AB 2 for a discussion of the creative role of the letter ה. 9. See Hebrew text notes to AB 6.9
10. The phrase: 'A land flowing with milk and honey', first appears in Ex.3:8 when God calls Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.
11. See below AB 10 and 17.
12. See above p.34.

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The Tractate of Satan

7.1. Tav Shin, Resh Qoph - In order to praise his works because he weakens Satan [and] all creatures and brings them into judgment on the great Day of Judgment in the future time.

2. Because he polishes his sword like lightning in the world, as it is said, When I have sharpened the lightning etc. (Deut.32:41). This is the great Day of Judgment when he darts like lightning in the world. 'With justice in my hand I will render vengeance to my enemy' (Deut.32:41) - this is Satan. And to those who hate me (Deut.32:41) - this is Sammael and Dubbiel.

3. Firstly, the Holy One, blessed be He, brings Sammael and Dubbiel for the Day, and places them in judgment in the presence of all humanity, and says to them, 'Foolish ones who are in the world, why did you slander my sons all those years with ? until I stood up and destroyed my house and burned my temple; and twice banished my sons among the peoples of the world. And I sat all those years in mourning like a man who sits in the days of his mourning whose right hand is behind him - all those years in great pain. Now come and give me [your] plea.

4. Then Dubbiel is ready to give an answer before the Mighty One and says before him, 'Lord of the Universe, what have I done? Was it not the case that when you exiled them into the hand of the King of Babylon, you made them go round before all the princes of the



kingdoms that are on high, and there was not one of them who welcomed them with a friendly expression except me alone? When they sinned I received the bribe from them and saved them from the judgment. Furthermore, when they returned to their land and to their city, I was their helper and I supported them when they rebuilt the temple, as it is said, Thus said Cyrus, King of Persia etc. (Ezra 1:2).'

5. Then Sammael is ready to answer before the Holy One, blessed be He, and says before him, Lord of the Universe, what have I done? Did I not fulfil their needs, and did they not work at the Torah and the commandments? Furthermore, on their account I prepared bridges and baths, and I increased silver and gold in the world so that with it all the world might engage in trade.'

6. At that moment Michael gets up to go because of what he (Sammael) was saying, until the Holy One, blessed be He, calls after him and says to him, 'Michael, Michael, why are you fleeing?' Michael answers and says before the Holy One, 'Lord of the Universe, I was fleeing because of this wicked one's words.' He says to him, 'Go back to your place.' And he will respond with an answer to him, 'Today I will exact payment from the enemies of my sons and I will avenge them.' As it said, And he will take vengeance on my enemies. (Deut.32:43).

7. Immediately Michael returns and stands with him in judgment before the Holy One, blessed be He, and says to him (Sammael), 'You fool in the world, all that you did, you did for your own needs. You

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set up the bridges only to take tax from them every day, and you made the bath-houses only in order to indulge yourself in them.' And the Holy One, blessed be He, is ready to help him [Michael] with his answer, and he too says to Sammael, 'You fool in the world, you say, "I increased silver and gold in the world". Silver and gold and precious stones and pearls are all mine, as it is said, The silver is mine and the gold is mine (Hag.2:8)'

8. Immediately the Holy One, blessed be He, passed a sentence of judgment on him which decreed that he should be thrown into the midst of Gehenna. And why is the expression, 'sentence of judgment be passed on him (inscribed on him)' used? It teaches that in the case of every single wicked person on whose wickedness the Holy One, blessed be He, passes judgment, Metatron, Prince of the Presence, stands and writes upon his forehead [the sentence] 'to be thrown into the midst of Gehenna'. The mark of Gehenna, contempt is its name, as it is said, Some to life of the World (to Come) (Dan.12:2). Contempt is nothing other than Gehenna, as it is said, And they will be contempt to all flesh (Is.66:24).

9. At that moment the Holy One, blessed be He, [takes] Sammael and Dubbiel and hands them over to Gabriel and Michael, and says to them, 'Go and throw them into the midst of Gehenna.' What did Gabriel and Michael do then? They hand them over in a chain of fire, and lead them from one end of the world to the other. And they show their disgrace to all humanity, and all the nations of the world see them and are confounded, as it is said, The nations will see etc. (Mic.7:16). And after this, they lead them and throw [them] into the

midst of Gehenna, as it is said, The wicked shall be silent in darkness (I Sam.2:9). There is no darkness except Gehenna, as it is said, Let their way be dark etc. (Ps.35:6).

10. At that moment Nigrasgiel, Prince of Gehenna, and Zaaphiel, Prince of Sheol, stand up and say before the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Lord of the Universe, we are not able to receive all these wicked ones.' He says to them, 'Why?' They say before him, 'Lord of the Universe, because of the [fire] of the ministering angels which has been stirred up against us, and their fire attacks our fire.' The Holy, blessed be He, says to them, 'Do not fear. I am making war on them from above and you from below.'

11. Immediately the Holy One, blessed be He, shot three arrows at them from above, as it is said, The arrows of a warrior are sharpened with coals of broom. (Ps.120:4). The warrior is none other than the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is said, The Lord is strong and a warrior etc. (Ps.24:8). And the coals of broom are nothing other than Gehenna and Sheol, as it is said, Those who pick mallow etc. (Job 30:4).

The chapter ends.

This chapter begins the second part of the Midrash entitled in the text, **מסכתא שטן** the 'Tractate of Satan'. The first part began with God's embryonic thoughts on creating the present world, and it ended, in chapter 6, with the vision of an abundant new world created by God for the righteous. The major concern of the opening six chapters was God's **מעשה בראשית**, 'work of creation'. This included the sustaining of the world, its destruction, and the creation of the World to Come. The emphasis in those chapters was placed on God's rôle rather than the response or behaviour of what had been created. The underlying message seems to be that, if God had acted at the beginning of time, at the behest of the waters (1), by creating a world, how much more will God act in the future when the new world is to be created for those who have proved themselves to be righteous and faithful. In chapter 1 we were told that God created the world as a father, signifying a relationship with creation that is both intimate and everlasting (2). Creation is used as a guarantee for the hope of the righteous. By reminding them of God's past mighty works, their faith in the future judgment of this world and the creation of the World to Come is strengthened. The author writes as if the day of judgment has actually arrived. The wicked are about to be punished, and goodness and righteousness are to be triumphant, thus assuming the future hope is a reality rather than a dream.

The success of the World to Come is dependent on God extinguishing all the powers of evil so that they cease to exist in

the new age. The second and third alphabet combinations describe how God's enemies are destroyed. The second one, the Tractate of Satan, deals with the enemies of God that have their origin in the heavens; and the third with the enemies that belong on the earth: Leviathan and Behemoth, Gog and Magog.

This chapter shares the same subject matter as chapters 8 and 9. All three provide a vivid description of the destruction of evil in the form of Satan and his angelic retinue. In this first chapter of the tractate, chapter seven of the Midrash, three sources of evil, Satan, Sammael and Dubbiel, are brought forth for divine judgment, although only two, Sammael and Dubbiel, are dealt with in detail.

The first part of the Midrash ended with the letters ם"ש, forming the alphabetical framework for chapter six. As the Midrash had progressed through the alphabet, so had God progressed through the works of creation. The first two letters of the alphabet א and ב which are used to form the word אב, 'father', provided the context for creation: God as father created the world. The last two letters ם"ש provided the verb שם, which described God's action of putting wonderful things into the World to Come. Having completed his account of creation, the author now takes the alphabet and begins at its end with the letters ק"ש"ת. When the alphabet is reversed the same divine power that we witnessed constructively creating the world is turned on to the world with all its destructive force to judge it. The destruction of the present world was mentioned in chapter five, but, as we noted, no emphasis was put on the details or implications of the destruction. Instead

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the end of the present world was seen in the positive context that it is the sign that the World to Come is to be created. Now that subject is returned to and the negative implications are detailed, namely, the judgment of those who made it necessary for the present world to be destroyed. By working backwards through the alphabet the author of the Midrash displays how it contains the power to destroy as well as to create.

The letters that provide the structure for this chapter are  $\text{ש"ן}$  and  $\text{ק"ך}$ .  $\text{ש"ן}$  make up the root of the word  $\text{שָׁחַח}$  (hiphil participle of  $\text{שָׁחַח}$ ) meaning 'weakens'. The second pair of letters  $\text{ק"ך}$  both appear in the verb  $\text{קָדַח}$ , 'to polish', and in the noun  $\text{קָדַח}$ , 'lightning'. Unlike the previous chapter where the letters  $\text{ן"ש}$  were constantly being referred to, the letters here do not play such a significant part.

Chapter seven, and most of the remainder of the Midrash, are set in eschatological times. The day of judgment has dawned. God has a polished sword at hand and is about to act on the side of righteousness and justice (3). The two pairs of letters (  $\text{ש"ן}$  and  $\text{ק"ך}$  ) are given at the beginning of the chapter, and they are followed by the explanation 'in order to praise his works'. This phrase seems to underline the idea that God's judgment will not only deal with evil, but will also be an opportunity for God to display such power and control that those aware of it will be prompted to praise God as at the time of creation (1).

As we said above, the letters  $\text{ש"ן}$  are used to construct the

verb 'he weakens'. The object of the verb is Satan and all creatures. The combination of Satan with 'all creatures' (or 'all creation') seems strange, especially in the light of the fact that the text contains no 1 between the two objects of the verb. Perhaps in the context of the day of judgment, Satan is at the head of creation since he has led creation into evil ways. All creation is weakened by God in order that they may be brought before the divine court for judgment (4). One text that contains many parallels to the judgment scene described in this chapter is 3 Enoch. There is an overall difference between the two texts, however, in that in 3 Enoch judgment is something continuous and the heavenly court is constantly in session, whereas in Midrash Aleph Beth, God's judgment is eschatological and cosmological and as such can only take place once and for all on the day of judgment. In this instance our Midrash reflects a more biblical and traditional eschatology. The angels that are named in this chapter are Satan, Sammael and Dubbiel. Satan appears in the Bible, for example, in Job 1-2 (5). There he does not appear to be a particularly bad character. Rather he functions in the heavenly court as an accuser who brings the activities of humanity, including Job, to God's attention. As Jewish angelology developed, Satan retains the rôle of 'accuser' but the character or 'theory' of Satan evolved to become the mythical personification of all that is evil. In 2 Enoch we find an explanation of how Satan lost his former position within the heavenly retinue:

And one from out of the order of angels, having turned away with the order that was under him, conceived an impossible thought, to place his throne higher than the clouds above the earth, that he might become equal in rank to my (God's) power. And I threw him out from the height with

his angels, and he was flying in the air continuously above the bottomless. 2 Enoch 29:4-5.

This passage not only explains the 'fall' of Satan, but also reflects the rivalry between God and Satan, a characteristic of the Satan myth, and a feature of our Midrash.

The two characters accompanying Satan are Sammael and Dubbiel. Frequently in rabbinic literature Sammael is synonymous with Satan. In Deut.R.11.10 he is referred to as 'the Chief of Accusers'. Here he is distinct from Satan and seems to be one of a pair with Dubbiel (6). There is a useful parallel to our text in 3 Enoch where the same characters Satan, Sammael and Dubbiel appear together:

Every day Satan sits with Sammael, Prince of Rome, and with Dubbiel, Prince of Persia, and they write down the sins of Israel on tablets and give them to the seraphim to bring them before the Holy One, blessed be He, so that he should destroy Israel from the world. But the seraphim know the secrets of the Holy One, blessed be He, that he does not desire that this nation of Israel should fall. What then do the seraphim do? Every day they take the tablets from Satan's hand and burn them in the blazing fire that stands opposite the high and exalted throne, so that they should not come into the presence of the Holy One, blessed be He, when he sits upon the throne of judgment and judges the whole world in truth. 3 Enoch 26:12.

Since Sammael and Dubbiel are 'evil angels', it is no surprise that their kingdoms are the traditional enemy empires of Israel: Rome and Persia (7). This could explain the presence of Michael in this chapter of the Midrash. Since he is the prince of Israel he has



particular reason to be present at the trial of princes of enemy nations.

Having described the context of this chapter as the day of judgment, the Midrash moves to the second pair of letters ק"ר. As we said above, these letters provide both the verb קרַך, 'to polish' and the noun קרַב, 'lightning'. God is preparing for the imminent judgment and there is no doubt that this is going to culminate in the physical punishment of those on trial. The reference to lightning and God's sword prompts the quotation from Deut.32:41 (8). The Midrash only quotes briefly from this biblical passage to give the reader the necessary clue to understand the chapter. The full text of the passage is as follows:

See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no God beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and I say, I, I live for ever. When I sharpen the lightning of my sword and my hand seizes justice, I will take vengeance on my enemy and requite those who hate me. I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh with the blood of the slain and the captives... Deut.32:39-42.

AB 7.2 is a textual exegesis of this passage from Deuteronomy. The Midrash is using the 'pesher' type of exegesis first found in the Dead Sea Scrolls and used extensively in rabbinic literature. The text is interpreted in such a way that it is seen to refer precisely to particular incidents occurring at a later time. In the context of the Dead Sea Scrolls, various biblical books and passages are interpreted to be prophecies that are being fulfilled in the life and the fate of that community. This is taken to have eschatological

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significance since the fulfilment of prophecy is a sign that God is seen to be at work in the world in a new way, and this can only mean that divine judgment is imminent. In Midrash Aleph Beth divine judgment is happening.

In our Midrash the emphasis lies more on the reality of the day of judgment rather than on its timing. Biblical passages which refer to the reality of a final judgment are numerous, but they are not obvious in every biblical book. This applies particularly to the Torah where eschatology, in a cosmological sense, is not a subject discussed in the text. However, if a writer wished to influence the beliefs of his readers it would be necessary to make reference to the Torah since it is regarded as the most authoritative part of the Bible. This is what seems to be happening in our Midrash. If the author simply required biblical proof-texts for the day of judgment then he could find many relevant and lucid examples in books such as Ezekiel or Daniel. Instead he prefers to use Deuteronomy and interpret it to make its relevance clear because it is part of the Torah. He uses Deut.32 which consists in the main of a description of divine judgment being exercised on God's enemies and they are synonymous with Israel's enemies.

In order to show that the Deuteronomic passage refers to the judgment of the world and the evil powers contained within it, each phrase of vs 41 is explained with reference to the world and the characters Satan, Sammael and Dubbiel none of whom are expressly referred to in the text (9). Instead of MT **צָרִי**, 'my enemies', the

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Midrash takes the noun as singular **אֶנְי**, 'my enemy', referring to Satan.

Once the basis for the judgment scene has been 'proved' from the Torah, the chapter continues with details of the eschatological drama (AB 7.3). Sammael and Dubbiel are to be dealt with first. It is not clear in the text whether the judgment scene is taking place in heaven or on earth. All we are told is that God, with polished sword, is going to bring justice and vengeance into the world (**הָעוֹלָם**). The word **הָעוֹלָם** in our Midrash usually refers comprehensively to the heavens and the earth. It is more likely that the location is a heavenly one since that is the usual place where God exercises the rôle of judge in biblical and post-biblical literature (10).

First Sammael and Dubbiel are brought into the presence of 'all humanity'. The Hebrew of the text literally reads 'all who come into the world', and it is not clear whether this refers to those alive at the time of this judgment or to every human being who has ever been born. Perhaps we can clarify the scene by referring to Dan.7 which contains the most lucid biblical account of the judgment of the world. Some scholars have argued that humanity is present in that scene in the form of a representative figure, the 'son of man' (11):

...thrones were placed and one that was ancient of days took his seat...the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened...with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the ancient of days and was presented before him.  
Dan.7:9-13.

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If this is the case, the same idea seems to be reflected in our text: it is necessary for all humanity to be represented in 'court' on the day of judgment in order to bear witness against the powers of evil and, ultimately, to receive the reward for remaining righteous despite those powers at work in the world.

In the context of the forensic imagery used in this chapter, God plays the part of prosecutor and judge. The trial begins with God asking Sammael and Dubbiel to explain why they continually acted against God's people in the world, despite the fact that God's will for the people had been made clear through the destruction of the temple and the time of exile and dispersion. Dubbiel replies first, claiming he is innocent of the charges against him. His actions, he pleads, were always intended to help, rather than hinder, humanity. Then Sammael, also pleading his innocence, argues that he too acted in the best interests of humanity.

Unlike the passage from 3 Enoch 26:12 quoted above, our Midrash has not identified Dubbiel and Sammael directly with any earthly kingdoms. However, through their responses to God's accusations it becomes clear that they are associated with the Persian and the Roman empires respectively. Dubbiel's identification with the Persians becomes evident when he refers to the Babylonian exile and explains that it is only when the Israelites fall into the hands of the Persians that they receive charitable treatment. Furthermore, it was Cyrus, King of Persia who continued to help them when they returned to their land by encouraging them to build the new temple. Likewise, Sammael's identification with Rome becomes

clear when he refers to his work of building bridges and bath-houses which are the hall-marks of Roman civilisation. As the chapter continues we find that, although they are both to share the same fate in Gehenna, the greatest portion of blame falls on Sammael. The reason for this could be related to Sammael's connection with Rome. Sammael should have learnt from the lessons of Israel's history what was against God's will for the people, particularly in relation to the destruction of the temple and the Babylonian exile.

The anthropomorphic picture of God sitting like one mourning during Israel's periods of exile comes at the end of the charges listed against Dubbiel. This description is reminiscent of a passage in Nehemiah which would be apposite as a parallel since the setting for Nehemiah is the last years of the Babylonian exile. Nehemiah's mourning comes as a result of hearing news from the land of Judah that the city walls of Jerusalem have been broken down and its gates destroyed by fire:

When I heard these words I sat down and wept,  
and mourned for days; and I continued fasting and  
praying before the God of heaven... Neh.1:4.

According to the Midrash, which is describing the situation from the context of the eschatological judgment, God mourned all the years of the exile and dispersion. The frustration felt by God during those years is underlined by the use of the first person:

And I sat all those years in mourning like a man  
who sits in the days of his mourning whose right  
hand is behind him - all those years in great pain.  
AB 7.3

In biblical imagery, the right hand of God is the most powerful instrument of divine action. For example, it is responsible for the liberation of the Israelites from Egypt (12). In an earlier chapter, when commenting on the arms of God, the Midrash had listed numerous occasions when God had eagerly stretched forth his arm or his right hand on behalf of Israel (13). In contrast, here we find God restraining his right hand, as if forcing himself to be passive despite the actions taken against Israel by the foreign nations. In the light of all those years of restraint, the judgment of Dubbiel and Sammael cannot be anything but severe. In presenting this picture of divine restraint, the Midrash becomes in effect an apology to explain why God's chosen people had to undergo the humiliation of living in exile, seeing the land that had been given to them by God, including the temple, destroyed, and later living in their land whilst it was governed by a foreign power. During all those tribulations God was not indifferent to their plight, rather he was feeling their pain and longing to act on their behalf.

The first reaction to Dubbiel and Sammael's defence comes from Michael. As the guardian angel of Israel, he takes particular offence on hearing their account of their dealings with his nation, and attempts to leave the court. He is ordered back to his seat by God with the reassurance that all the sins that have been committed against Israel are going to be avenged this day. When Sammael has finished his defence, Michael plays the rôle of chief prosecutor and dismisses the case for the defence by stating that all the seemingly good deeds done on behalf of Israel were in fact acts of self-interest. God steps in to help Michael by adding that by

his defence Sammael had only compounded his guilt by taking credit for producing things, like silver and gold, that have their origin in God alone.

The sentence of being cast into the midst of Gehenna is passed on them by God (14). The Midrash then introduces another character, Metatron, who has the task of writing the appropriate sentence of judgment upon the forehead of any one who has been condemned by God (15). The branding of Sammael and Dubbiel with the 'mark of Gehenna' seems to be part of the process of humiliation that is integral to their judgment and punishment. This humiliation continues with Sammael and Dubbiel being taken by Gabriel and Michael and paraded in chains in front of all the nations of the world. The hope that Gehenna would be the fate of Rome appears in b.Ab.Zarah 17a where Gehenna says, 'Give me the heretics, and the wicked state (Rome)'. This is reflected in our Midrash in the judgment of Sammael. The fate of Sammael and Dubbiel is confirmed by using Dan.12:2 as a proof-text. Although the Midrash quotes only from the beginning of the verse, it goes on to interpret the second half of it where the word 'contempt' occurs:

...and some to shame and contempt. Dan.12:2b.

'Contempt' is interpreted as a name for Gehenna. By then referring to Is.66.:24, the reality of Gehenna as a place can be verified by scripture.

Gabriel and Michael eventually throw Sammael and Dubbiel into the midst of the darkness of Gehenna (16), which is under the

jurisdiction of God, as are the angels who govern it (17). The two angels of Gehenna and Sheol, who are ready to receive Sammael and Dubbiel, are called Nigrasgiel and Zaaphiel. Zaaphiel's name is derived from נַאֲפִי, 'wrath', and means 'God's wrath' (18). However, when we attempt to clarify the meaning of Nigrasgiel's name it does not seem to derive from any semitic word. Instead, it is tempting to see it as a derivative from the Latin verb 'nigresco', 'to be dark' (19).

Nigrasgiel and Zaaphiel encounter problems as they receive Sammael and Dubbiel, and complain to God about the fire that is raining down upon them from the ministering angels in heaven. The main problem seems to be that the ministering angels are very keen to add their fire to the fire of Gehenna in punishing Sammael and Dubbiel, but this fire seems to be missing its target and, instead, becomes a danger to Nigrasgiel and Zaaphiel. To solve the problem, God takes over from the ministering angels and fires three arrows from the heavens into Gehenna at the same time as Nigrasgiel and Zaaphiel attack from below. The Talmud contains this tradition of double bombardment as a punishment for a slanderer, which is the same sin that Dubbiel was accused of in AB 7.3:

Said R.Hisda in the name of Mar Ukba: About one who slanders, the Holy One, blessed be He, says to the prince of Gehennon: I shall be against him from above, you be against him from below, and we shall condemn him, as it is said: Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of broom b.'Arak.15b.

The chapter ends with quotations from Ps.120:4 and Job 30:4 which are used to prove that it is God himself who fires the arrows



into Gehenna. The passage from Ps.120:4 quoted by the Midrash, 'The arrows of a warrior are sharpened with coals of broom', is used to show it is God who fires the arrows since elsewhere, Ps.24:8, God is called a warrior. The coals of broom have the reputation of possessing supernatural powers of heat as the following story from the Midrash on Psalms illustrates:

Once it happened that two men going through the wilderness sat down under a broom-shrub, gathered some fallen twigs of the broom, broiled for themselves what they wanted to eat, and ate their vituals. A year later when they came back into the wilderness to the place of the broom-shrub and found the ashes of the fire which they had kindled, they said: 'It is now twelve months since we came through here and ate in this place.' Thereupon they raked up the ashes, and as they walked over them, their feet were burnt by the coals under the ashes, for they were still unextinguished. Midr.Pss.120.4.

The intense heat produced by the coals of broom leads to their identification with Gehenna. The quotation from Job underlines this identification since it is taken from a passage which vividly describes the fate of those who are cast out:

Those who pick mallow and the leaves of bushes and the coals of broom to warm themselves. They have been driven out from among men; they shout after them as after a thief...A senseless and disreputable brood, they have been whipped out of the land. Job 30:4-5,8.

All the events that are described in this chapter, the trial and the punishment, relate directly to Israel. The Babylonians, and subsequently the Persians, are judged according to their treatment of the people of Israel during the period of the exile; and the Roman empire is judged according to the way it acted during its occupation

of Palestine. This tendency to put Israel, the land and the people of God, at the centre of the universe first appeared in the Midrash in chapter three: 'I did not create my world except for the sake of Israel alone' (20). Not only was the present world created for the sake of Israel, it is also to be judged at the end of time only in terms of its treatment of Israel.

The ending of the chapter, where God takes the initiative in the actual physical punishment of Sammael and Dubbiel, displays one of the most evident characteristics of our Midrash: its emphasis on the pre-eminence and physical reality of God. For example, in AB 5.2 we were told that God had been responsible for personally engraving the features on each face of each angel with his little finger, and how God alone would be responsible for destroying the present world and creating the World to Come. Chapter 6 described how God puts everything - each grain of wheat, each fruit of each tree - into the World to Come. This characteristic continues to be evident in the Tractate of Satan: God brings Sammael and Dubbiel into court for judgment, God passes judgment, and God carries out punishment. The ministering angels are present and perform certain tasks, but it is God's personality and actions which continue to dominate the narrative. Deut.32:39ff, quoted in part at the beginning, sets the language and the scene for the chapter. The opening words of that passage underline this central characteristic, not only of the chapter, but of the Midrash as a whole:

See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no God beside me.

1. In AB 1.5 God's decision to create is prompted by the praise of the waters, providing God with an appetite for human praise; cf Job 38:7.
2. See AB 1.1 and commentary.
3. A comparable discussion of God's sword can be found in 3 Enoch 32:2: 'All the inhabitants of the world are fearful before him when they see his sword sharpened and gleaming like lightning from one end of the world to the other, and rays and sparks shooting from it as big as the stars of heaven, as it is written, When I have sharpened the lightning of my sword.'
4. See Dan.7:9ff for a biblical picture of the divine court in session for the day of judgment; also, 1 Kings 22:19-22; Ps.82; Job.1:6-12.
5. In Job 'Satan' does not necessarily function as a proper name, it can be translated as 'the adversary'.
6. The name Dubbiel seems to originate from a reference in Dan.7:5 where Persia is symbolised as a bear (217), and Dubbiel would mean 'bear god' or 'god of Persia'.
7. For a discussion of 'angelic jurisdiction' in relation to the prince of the world see AB 4.8 and commentary; b.Yoma 77a identifies Dubbiel as the prince of the kingdom of Persia.
8. Other biblical references to God's sword in the the context of judgment can be found in Is.27:1, 34:5, 66:16; Ez.21:3.
9. The word מלך does occur in Deut.32:40, but with the prefix ל. It is not clear if מלך is taken from the biblical text or if it is part of the author's interpretation.
10. For biblical references see n.3 above; for post-biblical e.g.'s see P.Alexander, '3 Enoch', pp.244-45.
11. For a recent assessment of scholarship on the question of the 'son of man' see, G.Vermees, Jesus and the World of Judaism, pp.89-99.
12. See Ex.15:6,12.
13. See AB 3.6.
14. Gehenna (Gehenna = form of the noun, Gehinnom = the Hebrew),

the traditional place of punishment, is referred to constantly in apocalyptic and rabbinic literature. Its geographical location is a subject for discussion – whether below the earth or above the firmament (see b.Ta'an.32b; b.Pes.94a) – as well as its extensive size (see b.Pes.94a).

15. For a discussion of Metatron and the Prince of the Presence see AB 4.8. This particular task of Metatron would seem to be related to his rôle as heavenly scribe, see b.Hag.15a.
16. Despite the great fires that characterise Gehenna it is a place of darkness, see b.Yeb.109b cf Job 10:22.
17. P. Alexander, op.cit., p.285 n.f on 31:2, notes two functions for these angels: 1. to punish the wicked in this world; 2. To oversee the torture of the wicked in hell.
18. Zaaphiel appears in 3 Enoch 44:2 paired with Samkiel.
19. Nigrasgiel is mentioned in Midrash Kohen as one of the three princes stationed at the entrance of Gehenna; see K. Kohler, 'Angelology', in JE, vol.1, p.593b.
21. AB 3.3.

8.1 Sadhe Pe, Ayin Samekh - Because he watches and passes judgment on Satan, and brings him to the Day of Judgment to give the judgment. And he says to him, 'Fool who is in the world, six thousand years you slandered the works of my hand to me all the day long. In the beginning you slandered Adam, the first man, and Eve, until I banished them from the Garden of Eden, and decreed death on them and on their many generations, until the end of all the generations.

2. You slandered the sons of the generation of the flood to me, until I brought a flood into the world, and I destroyed them from the world. You slandered the sons of the generation of the division to me, until I scattered them from there over the face of all the world, and I mixed up their language. You slandered Job, the righteous one, to me until I brought upon him sufferings and punishments for twelve whole months. You slandered the sons of the first temple, until I delivered them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and he destroyed my house and burned my temple, and carried my sons into exile among the nations of the world. You slandered the sons of the latter temple, until I delivered them into the hand of the Greeks who came up and destroyed the temple, and they burned with fire the temple and the court and the altar. And they carried away the vessels which were in the sanctuary, and killed my sons and went away. You slandered ten wise elders, the Great Ones, who were among my sons, until I delivered them into the hand of the kings of Edom, and they put them to death as martyrs.'

3. As it is said, And I will remove the northerner far from you etc. (Joel 2:20). 'And the northerner' - this is Satan, for he watches and keeps his eye on the sons of men, and by his hand they are sent off to Gehenna. And I will banish him to a parched and desolate land. (ibid.). - this is Gehenna, for the Holy One, blessed be He, will cast Satan into its midst, with his face to the eastern sea - this is the latter temple that Satan cast his eyes upon and made into a desert. And the stink of him will go up and his foul smell rise. Because he concentrates on slandering Israel and, most of all, sages and their students, all day long in the presence of the Holy One, blessed be He.

4. At that moment the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Satan, 'Go, leave the world alone.' He said in his presence, 'Why?' He said to him, 'Because the appointed time has arrived for me to renew the world, and you have no business being in the new world.' As it is said, And to the wicked God says (Ps.50:16). 'My statutes' are nothing other than the good things of the World to Come, as it is said, Feed me with the food of my statutes. (Prov. 30:8) And it says, They ate their statute etc. (Gen.47:22). And it says, And it is a statute for Israel etc. (Is.57:20).

5. Satan replied to the Holy One, blessed be He, and said in his presence, 'Lord of the Universe, you said to me, "Leave the world alone". Behold, I am like you because I am your partner. For you created heaven, I created earth; you created firmaments, I created deeps; you created animals, I created demons; you created spirits, I

created satyrs; you created lights, I created darknesses; you created creatures, and I created worms; you created life, I created death; you created good things, I created bad things; you created the Garden of Eden, I created Gehenna; you created the righteous, I created the wicked. Half of all the world is yours, half is mine. So how can you say to me, "Leave the world alone". And all the angels of Satan were standing by to help him, and they gave him strength and power and might, as it is said, And the wicked like a troubled sea etc. (Is.57:20).

6. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, 'Fool who is in the world, you say to me, "I created Gehenna". So pass into the midst of Gehenna, you and [your retinue]. If the fire of Gehenna has power over you, you belong to the world, you and [your retinue]. And if not, behold, I will give you a fair share of the cake.' As it is said, The wicked as the pride of his countenance etc. (Ps.10:4)

7. The whole congregation of the wicked are going down to Gehenna with the Accuser at their head, as it is said, And in darkness shall the wicked be silenced etc. (1 Sam.2:9). Does not 'man' here mean Satan? As it is said, And a traveller came to the rich man. (2 Sam.12:4). And a 'tongue of fire' of Gehenna will come up like lightning, up to the height of the heavenly firmament to receive the Accuser and all the wicked, as it is said, Therefore as the tongue of fire devours straw etc. (Is.5:24). And the fire of Gehenna will confront Satan and all the wicked at 3,000 miles, and will swallow them like a monster that swallows man, as it is said, The Lord in his anger will swallow them etc. (Ps.21:9).

8. As soon as Satan saw Gehenna, that it swallows like a monster, he spits on it and extinguishes it. But Nigrasgiel rekindles it as [it was before]. At that moment seven Gehennas opened for him with its doors. And each Gehenna opens 7,000 doors to him, to Satan, and to all the wicked angels who are brought down by the Holy One, blessed be He. And the Holy One, blessed be He, performs great miracles from above and miracles from below. And he shows them great deeds of strength in heaven and great deeds of strength on earth, and he rains upon them blood and fire from the heavens, as it is said, I will put signs in the heavens etc. (Joel 3:3). And the angel Metatron, Prince of the Presence, stands up and throws upon them stones of fire, and stones of flame, and hailstones and stones of crystal. And every one of these stones measure 346,000 miles and this is the symbolic value in gematria of stones of crystal (346). But what is 'crystal'? This refers to Gehenna against their head, as it is said, Behold, the storm of the Lord, wrath etc. (Jer.23:19).

9. Four kinds of fire go forth from the presence of the Shekinah: one red like blood, and one clear like the sun, one black like sackcloth, one green like grass. It engulfs Satan and the evil angels who are with him in flame, for there is no man able to stand in the presence of his wrath at 365,000 miles, as it is said, Fire goes up before (him and engulfs his adversaries). (Ps.97:3).

10. And are not the adversaries of the Holy One, blessed be He, flesh and blood? They are maggots when they live, and worms when they die, as it is said, Even more man is a maggot etc. (Job 25:6).



But why does scripture say 'his adversaries'? 'His adversaries' are none other than Satan and the evil angels who, together with him, are brought down with him by the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is said, I will (crush his adversaries from before him) and strike down those who hate him. (Ps.89:23).

11. Then Satan weeps, and the evil angels who are with him, because of the fire of Gehenna which has scalded him from below, and the Holy One, blessed be He, laughing at them from above, as it is said, He who sits in the heavens laughs etc. (Ps.2:4). Then the Holy One, blessed be He, says to Satan, 'Did you not say, "I, I created Gehenna"? Behold, you are Gehenna's and Gehenna is yours. Why are you weeping?' He says in his presence, 'Lord of the Universe, because of the fire which you have made so powerful over us that we are not able to endure them.'

12. What did the Holy One, blessed be He, do then? He called them by their names and made them go back to their place, and he suppressed their anger. He put them on one side and seven types of Gehenna fire engulf them. These are: fire of Sheol, fire of Abaddon, fire of the pit, fire of the pit of destruction, fire of heavy clay, fire of the gates of death, fire of the gates of the shadow of death. And these are their names: the fire of glowing coals, the burning fire, the torch fire, the flaming fire, the blistering fire, the blazing fire, the kindling fire - singeing them with light up to the height of the heavenly firmament, as it is said, Fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his word. (Ps.148:8).

The chapter ends.

In the beginning of the previous chapter we were told that Satan, Sammael and Dubbiel were to be brought by God into the heavenly court for judgment on the day of judgment. The chapter continued with an account of the trial and punishment of Sammael and Dubbiel, but, in that chapter, Satan's fate was not referred to. Satan's sins are so great that it takes this chapter and the next to provide an account of his fate. While Sammael and Dubbiel had been guilty of exploitation and maltreatment during the time Israel was in exile and under foreign occupation, Satan's guilt stretches back for 'six thousand years': from the time of Adam to the end of the Jewish Revolt in 135 c.e.

As the Midrash continues to work in reverse through the alphabet, two pairs of letters, **ז"ה** and **ח"ט**, form the framework for this chapter. The letters **ז** and **ה** form part of the verb **זכה**, 'to watch'. It is not immediately clear how the letters **ח** and **ט** appear in the narrative, but perhaps they suggest the verb **חטא**, rarely spelt with **ט**.

AB 8.1 describes God's act of bringing Satan into court in the same way that in the previous chapter Sammael and Dubbiel had been brought in (AB 7.3). Likewise, God's accusations against Satan follow the same pattern as those levelled against Sammael and Dubbiel: all are addressed **שומה שבועולם** as 'fool who is in the world'. We are immediately aware that the charges put to Satan are far greater than anything that has gone before since his wrong

doing is said to begin as soon as the history of humanity begins with the slandering of Adam and Eve. The reference to Adam and Eve in AB 8.1 takes us back to chapter four of the Midrash where we were told that the sin of Adam had caused the Shekinah to flee from Paradise (1). Now the true source of that sin which prompted the process of separation between God and humanity, Satan, is to receive God's justice. The identification of Satan with the serpent which tempted Adam and Eve is taken for granted in most post-biblical literature. One early example is found in the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon:

For God created man for incorruption, and made him in the image of his own eternity, but through the devil's envy death entered the world, and those who belong to his party experience it. Wisd.2:23-24.

The same identification is made in the New Testament:

And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world. Rev.12:9.

As a result of Satan's work, the Midrash continues, God banished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and decreed that they, and all humanity, should die. This is the first and perhaps the greatest of Satan's crimes since it affected all humanity, not only Israel, and every generation that has been and is yet to be born.

God's prosecution of Satan continues with a catalogue of Israel's punishments from God (AB 8.2). The blame for these events is seen to originate in the work of Satan because he slandered God's people and so prompted God to act against them. The reference to Satan's

treatment of Job reminds us of the vivid account of typical 'satanic' behaviour in Job 1-2.

In his role as accuser of Israel, Satan becomes the antithesis of the archangel Michael whose role is to intercede before God on Israel's behalf (2). Again we can see similarities between the contents of this chapter and chapter four. In chapter four when the ascent of the Shekinah was described, it was said to move steadily away with each new sinful act of Israel, from the earth, through each of the seven heavens until it had reached the seventh. In that chapter we were told how the sins committed effected God's existence, in this chapter we are told how those sins effected humanity's existence. Each sin prompted a punishment from God, from the time of Adam and Eve to the time of the Ten Martyrs.

The last sin and punishment mentioned which relates to the aftermath of the Bar Kochba rebellion marks the final chapter in Israel's occupation of the Promised Land. The Romans turned Jerusalem into a Roman colony named Aelia Capitolina. The Jews were driven out and non-Jewish settlers replaced them. No Jew was permitted to enter the city: any that did faced the death penalty (3). The memory of the Bar Kochba rebellion, the last attempt to overthrow the Roman occupation of Palestine, was kept alive in Jewish imagination in the legends of the Ten Martyrs (4). The most famous amongst the Ten was R. Akiba who had proclaimed Bar Kochba as the Messiah. According to legend, his flesh was torn from his body with iron combs and he died with a peaceful smile on his face having finished reciting the last word of the Shema'.

The biblical text that provides the impetus for Satan's judgment is taken from Joel where reference is made to 'the northerner' who in the Midrash is identified with Satan (AB 8.3). 'The north' in biblical imagery traditionally refers to Babylon, particularly in terms of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Judah and the subsequent Babylonian exile:

Thus says the Lord: 'Behold, a people is coming from the north country, a great country is stirring from the farthest parts of the earth. They lay hold on bow and spear, they are cruel and have no mercy, the sound of them is like the roaring sea; they ride upon horses, set in array as a man for battle, against you, O daughter of Zion!'. Jer.6:22-23.

Only a brief passage from Joel 2:20 is quoted, but it ends with 'etc.', which prompts the reader to go to the biblical context in order to discover the intended meaning of the quotation. The passage forms part of an extended oracle proclaiming the future vindication of God's people. Since the first century CE at least, these words of the prophet have been understood eschatologically: in the New Testament the prophesy of the outpouring of the spirit is understood to be fulfilled in the early church which interprets itself as the eschatological community already participating in the new age (5). By referring to Joel, the author of the Midrash brings to mind the horror of Satan's person both by identifying him with 'the northerner' - the source of every devastation of Israel in biblical times, and by underlining the eschatological context of the events being described in this chapter. The passages from Joel which come immediately before and after that quoted in the Midrash describe a

time when God has called a halt to Israel's sufferings and is about to pour out blessings upon his people similar to those expected in the World to Come:

Then the Lord became jealous for his land, and had pity on his people. The Lord answered and said to his people, 'Behold I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied...Fear not you beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and the vine give their full yield...the threshing floors shall be full of grain, and vats shall overflow with wine and oil...You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God who has dealt wondrously with you. Joel 2:18-19,22,24,26.

In the midst of this utopian vision comes the judgment on 'the northerner', and it is apparent that the vision can only become a reality if 'the northerner' is destroyed: only then will Israel be left alone to live in harmony with God. The full text of Joel 2:22 occurs in fragmentary form as it is being interpreted by the Midrash. The biblical verse reads as follows:

I will remove the northerner far from you, and drive him into a parched and desolate land, his front into the eastern sea, and his rear into the western sea; the stench and foul smell of him will rise, for he has done great things.

Satan is identified as the northerner, and Gehenna is identified with the parched and desolate land. The text of the manuscript is defective at this point, but it seems to identify the parched land or, desert, with the second temple, whose utter destruction has been shown to be the work of Satan, as well as with Gehenna.

This section of the Midrash ends by warning the reader that this

work of Satan is still continuing in the present – his judgment has not yet happened. His favourite victims are wise men and their students whom he never ceases from slandering before God.

Having made known all the charges against Satan, God tells him that now he must leave the world, since the time has come for the world to be renewed and there will be no place for Satan in the World to Come (AB 8.5). The evidence to prove that Satan cannot exist in the World to Come is first of all taken from Ps.50:16. The Midrash only quotes the first words of the verse: 'And to the wicked God says...' The verse continues:

'What right have you to recite my statutes, or  
take my covenant on your lips?

'My statutes' are interpreted as the good things of the World to Come. This is clarified further by reference to Prov.30:8: 'Feed me the food of my statutes'. The final, and weightiest, proof is found in the Torah, in Gen.47:22 where the words **וְאָכְלִי אֶת הַקָּמָה** appear. Although the word **קָמָה** means 'allowance' or 'appointed portion' in this context in Genesis, it can also mean 'statute' or 'law'. It is this latter meaning which is used in this interpretation. Thus the phrase from Gen.47:22 gains a new and ingenious meaning in the context of the Midrash alongside Prov.30:8: 'And they will eat their statutes'. The exegesis ends with a quotation from Ps.81:4: 'For it is a statute for Israel', again stressing the original point that Satan, the wicked one, can have no share in the World to Come since the World to Come is reserved for Israel.

Satan responds to God's words by challenging God's authority to act as his judge: how can God judge him when he is God's partner,

God's equal? Satan is not simply the antithesis of Michael, the keeper of Israel, but the antithesis of God, the creator of Israel and the world. Satan continues by illustrating with examples from creation in what sense he is God's partner (AB 8.5). This section is omitted in the edition of the text published by Wertheimer (6). It is a deliberate omission, rather than an error that occurred during the process of editing since the rest of the text is brought into line to cope with the missing section. After Satan has made his claims concerning creation, the ms gives us God's response:

'Fool who is in the world, you say to me, "I created Gehenna". So pass in to the midst of Gehenna...' AB 8.6.

Wertheimer's edition of the text has instead:

'Fool who is in the world, you say to me, "You created Gehenna". So pass into the midst of Gehenna...'

This brings the text into line with the omission of the section which described Satan's work at creation. The aim of this editorial work seems to be to remove the heterodox idea that God did not create the world on his own.

The list given by Satan which divides the work of creation between himself and God seems to be a straight forward example of dualistic speculation: God is responsible for all that is good, Satan is responsible for all that is evil (AB 8.5). However, one of the couplets in Satan's account appears rather ambiguous: 'you created creatures, I created worms'. 'Worms' are probably referred to specifically because the noun **תולעת** describes the type of worm



most associated with putrefaction and death (7). God creates fresh creatures with life, and these are set in contrast to the worms, created by Satan, whose life depends on the consumption of the creatures, usually dead or rotting.

When the question of two deities arises in rabbinic literature, one of the most important biblical texts that is discussed is Gen.1:26: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness'. Hence the debate tends to revolve around the question of how many powers created the world (8). These tend to be responses to a 'heresy' which sees the act of creation as a joint act:

R. Johanan said: In all the passages in which the Minim have taken (as grounds) for their heresy, their refutation is found near at hand. Thus: Let us make man in our image, (Gen.1:26), - And God created (singular) man in His own image (Gen.1:27); Come let us go down and confound their language, (Gen.1:7) - And the Lord came down (singular) to see the city and the tower (Gen.11:5); Because there were revealed (plural) to him God (Gen.35:7) - Unto God (singular) who answers me in the day of my distress (Gen.35:3)... b.San.38b (9).

Whereas in our Midrash it is not so much a question of Satan and God creating jointly as a situation in which Satan creates the earth and the lower forms of creation on his own, and God creates the heavens and the higher forms of creation on his own.

There do seem to be echoes in this passage of dualistic speculation similar to that found in early Christian gnosticism. Gnostic ideas such as those taught by Marcion speak of two deities: the Demiurge who created the world and the supreme God of Love revealed in Jesus Christ. Although these systems speak of two

deities, there is no real parallel with the passage in our Midrash since in gnosticism creation is not an act shared between two powers, but the sole prerogative of one.

The idea that God was not alone when he created the world is already present in biblical literature. In Proverbs we are told that Wisdom was created before the world came into being and that she was witness to God's work of creation:

The Lord created me at the beginning of his work,  
the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I was set  
up, at the first, before the beginning of the  
earth...When he established the heavens, I was  
there, when he drew a circle on the face of the  
deep...when he marked out the foundations of the  
earth, then I was beside him like a child.  
Prov.8:22-23,27,29-30; cp. Job 38.

In the apocryphal Book of Wisdom, Wisdom is described as the 'fashioner of all things' denoting an active rather than passive rôle in creation (10). Another divine attribute which is invested with the power to create in post-biblical literature is God's name. For example, in the Similitudes of Enoch God's name is said to be responsible for the creation of the world (11). In Sefer Yesira God's accomplice in creation is not so much the divine name as the twenty two letters of the Hebrew alphabet:

Twenty-two letters: he carved them, he hewed  
them, he weighed them and exchanged them, he  
combined them and formed with them the life of all  
creation and the life of all that would be formed.  
§19. 7

Thus we can find examples of God not being alone in the work of creation: in the case of Proverbs he has Wisdom by his side (12),

and, in the examples of the Book of Wisdom, 1 Enoch and Sefer Yesira, we can see entities separate from God, yet emanating from him, carrying out creation. What seems to be more unusual is the idea of creation being a joint dualistic act where God creates the heavens and the upper orders and an other being creates the earth and the lower orders. One example of Satan creating the earth is found in the New Testament apocryphal text, The Book of John the Evangelist (13).

This text takes up some of the themes in the <sup>Christian</sup> canonical Book of Revelation, for example, it uses precisely the same language to describe the signs and the events of the end time. In a series of questions put to Jesus by John during the Last Supper (14), the story of Satan is told. Satan originally had such glory with God in heaven that he commanded the powers of the heavens. Once he glimpsed the glory of God and, as a result, he resolved to be like God. He had the firmament opened up for him, and he travelled throughout the uncreated earth, even down to the depths of Gehenna. On his travels he managed to seduce some of the ministering angels into joining his rebellion. When God discovered his plan, he stripped him and his angels of their glorious appearance and cast them down to the firmament of the earth. From that position he created the dry land, the moon and the stars, thunder, rain, hail and snow, beasts and creeping things, fish and birds. Then he made man in his likeness, the shape of man and woman out of clay which he inhabited with two angels and created Paradise for them to live in. John is puzzled by this account of creation and asks:

How say men that Adam and Eve were created by God and set in paradise to keep the commandments of the Father, and were delivered unto death? And the Lord said to me: Hearken John, beloved of my Father; foolish men say thus in their deceitfulness that my Father made bodies of clay: but the Holy Ghost made he all the powers of the heavens, and the holy ones were found having bodies of clay because of their transgression, and therefore were delivered unto death. (15)

The gnostic overtones of this text are obvious, particularly in relation to its negative attitude towards the material world. It is of interest to us because it does reflect a dualistic description of creation: God created the heavens and Satan created the earth. However, in our Midrash, although Satan claims he is responsible for creating the earth, God is still regarded as the creator of light, creatures, life, all good things, the Garden of Eden and the righteous. This apocryphal text as a whole is an interesting parallel to our Midrash in that in the context of revealing eschatological secrets, secrets concerning creation are revealed.

This account of creation offered by Satan helps us to make sense of chapters five and six of the Midrash where we are told emphatically that the creation of the world to come is to be the sole work of God down to the smallest detail (AB 6.2-10). For example the destruction of all the inhabitants is explained as follows:

...so that not one of all those who stand before him in service have the opportunity to open their mouths to say, 'We, we created the new things of the world with the Holy One, blessed be He. (16)

Although Satan has the opportunity to say that he took part in

creation, God is not convinced of his great claims. He decides to put his claims to the test using the fires of Gehenna. If, as Satan has claimed, he created them then they should have no power over him (AB 8.6). If they have power over him then that will prove that he is simply 'one from the world', that is to say one of God's created beings. As the trial scene continues, we are told that Satan is not alone but has his own angelic retinue in attendance around him to support him (AB 8.7). The Midrash makes reference to Ps.10:4 to describe Satan's arrogant attitude towards God:

For the wicked boasts of the desires of his heart,  
and the man greedy for gain curses and  
renounces the Lord. In the pride of his  
countenance the wicked does not seek him; all his  
thoughts are, 'There is no God.'

And so Satan and his retinue descend into Gehenna. Again there is biblical proof provided for this stage in the proceedings as in the others. This time we are referred to 1 Sam.2:9:

He will guard the feet of his faithful ones; but the  
wicked shall be cut off in darkness; for not by  
might shall a man prevail.

The word אִישׁ 'man' is said to refer to Satan, because Satan is identified with the אִישׁ in the parable of the rich man and the poor man told by Nathan to David in 2 Sam.12:1-6. In that parable the rich man takes away the poor man's only lamb, and on hearing this David pronounces: 'As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die'. This is the important phrase for the Midrash since it can be interpreted to mean that Satan deserves to die as much as God deserves to live. Satan's fate in the fires of Gehenna

has been predicted in Isaiah 5:24 which is part of a passage describing the judgment laid up in store for the wicked.

The fire of Gehenna stretches for three thousand miles, but the power of Satan is so great that he extinguishes it by simply spitting on it (AB 8.8). Nigrasgiel rekindles the fire and Gehenna opens up to receive him. According to the Midrash there are seven Gehennas and each has seven thousand doors (17). The scene now becomes a show of strength from God's side. The imagery for the scene stems from Joel 3:3-4:

I will put signs in the heavens and on the earth,  
blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall  
be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood,  
before the great and terrible day of the Lord  
comes.

Metatron joins in the battle and throws gigantic missiles of fire and crystal at Satan and his retinue. The immense size of each missile is calculated to be 340,000 miles because the word 'crystal', אֲבִישׁ, has the value of 340 in gematria. The same phrase, אֲבִישׁ, occurs twice in Ezekiel 13:11-13 where it appears in the context of God's wrath against false prophets. The Ezekiel passage also makes reference to raging storms being a sign of God's anger, and this points us towards Jer.23:19 where the Midrash finds the prophecy for this stage in the battle against Satan:

Behold the storm of the Lord! Wrath has gone  
forth, a whirling tempest; it will burst upon the  
head of the wicked.

The raging storm described by Jeremiah is the bombardment thrown at Satan from Gehenna - he is to be fired upon from above with

blood and fire by God who resides in the heavens, and from below with the gigantic missiles thrown up by Metatron.

In the next stage of God's onslaught against Satan (AB 8.9), the fire of Gehenna plays the major rôle. We are told that four kinds of fire go forth from the Shekinah to engulf Satan and his retinue. These fires seem to be related to the four types of fire mentioned in chapter one of the Midrash. There the fires surrounded the presence of God as he roamed around the yet uncreated universe (18). The different colours of the fires reflect the intensity of their heat. We are told that it is not possible to stand within 365,000 miles of these fires, their heat is so intense. It is not clear whether the number 365,000 is gematric. Usually when gematria is being employed, as in the example of **אלגביש** in AB 8.8, it is clearly signified.

As a proof-text for the vengeful fire of God Ps.97:3 is quoted: 'Fire goes up before him and engulfs his adversaries'. The Midrash goes on to speculate about the identity of 'his adversaries' (AB 8.10). We have been told that no man can stand in the presence of God because of the power of the surrounding fire. 'His adversaries' could be flesh and blood because, the Midrash argues, on the basis of a passage from Job 25, we are told that nothing can stand the light of God's presence, even the moon becomes dull and the stars look shoddy, and man (flesh and blood) is even worse equipped because he is 'maggots and worms'. However, here 'his adversaries' are not man or 'flesh and blood' but Satan and his retinue. This is demonstrated by reference to another Psalm

where 'his adversaries ' are those who are 'brought down' by God, which is the unique fate reserved for Satan.

The fire causes Satan to weep (AB 8.11), but the punishment is not only of extreme physical pain originating in the depths of Gehenna, but also one of great humiliation originating in the heights of heaven where God sits and laughs at his fate. God mocks Satan by reminding him that he had claimed to have created Gehenna. Why should he weep now that God has made him one with Gehenna? God responds to the complaints of Satan by taking them out of Gehenna. But the torture does not cease, instead of engulfing Satan and his retinue with a mass of fire, he tortures them individually with each of the seven fires of judgment. The names of these fires echo biblical language regarding death and hell, for example, the 'fire of Abaddon' alludes to a passage in Job 28:22. These fires are so powerful that they reach to the top of the heavens. This completes the first part of Satan's judgment and the chapter ends.

Again, as in previous chapters, the picture of God that is presented is of a highly anthropomorphic figure. God sees it as his personal task to deal with Satan. Metatron is mentioned as one who is ready to join in the punishment, but all the events, from the enumeration of Satan's sins to the physical task of directing the fire, feature God as the prime mover.

The most interesting feature in this chapter is the idea that the creation of the present world was not the work of God alone, but of both Satan and God. This does answer many problems in relation to the question of the origin and existence of evil in the world. We are



told that it was not God but Satan who created demons and satyrs, darkneses and worms, death and bad things, Gehenna and the wicked. The question of why God allowed Satan to create these things, and why he allowed their existence, along with Satan, to continue unchecked for so long is not answered. The most disturbing claim made by Satan is that he created the earth, since this undermines the intimate relationship believed to exist between God and the earth. Was it Satan then who surveyed all that he had made and said it was good?

The Midrash does deal with the possibility that Satan did in fact create as he claimed to do, and thereby allows for the speculation that this explains the origin of evil in the world. Such speculation tends to arise at times of crisis when the enemies of God's people seem to be triumphant, and in control in the world (19). Such a notion is disposed of when it is clearly displayed that Satan does not have any control over Gehenna. He had claimed to have created Gehenna, but how could he have created it when it is not in his control but God's? This display of the worthlessness of Satan's claims in relation to Gehenna can be applied to his claims regarding creation. Thus by the end of the chapter our Midrash underlines the orthodox Jewish belief, concerning creation. It seems that at the beginning of the twentieth century Wertheimer feels so threatened by these ideas that he emends the text to exclude them. God's rôle in creation is one of the tenets of Jewish belief, recited daily in the 'Amida: 'God Most High, Maker of heaven and earth'. The constancy of this belief among the rabbis in the face of recurring heterodox speculation prompts this comment from Urbach:

...despite the fact that the Sages broadened the canvas of the picture of creation in Genesis, adding to its details and explaining its obscurities, they still remained true to its fundamentals. God himself and alone - without the help of Demiurge, angels or forces - created the world. (20)

In this chapter we have an example of God's nature which portrays him as a tyrant who realises his judgment by sheer force. Whereas Satan is portrayed in such a way as to attract pity, weeping with his comrades as they are burnt on all sides by the unremitting fires of Gehenna, and God looking on laughing. God, as regards the judgment and punishment of his enemies and the enemies of his people, is a character without qualms or mercy. However, as regards his people, the righteous remnant, he is the adoring and indulgent Father (21). This clearly defined dual nature of God is necessary in the context of eschatological reward and punishment.

## Notes

1. AB 4.5.
2. See AB 7.6 and commentary.
3. For a full account of Jewish history at this time see E. Schürer, The History of the Jewish People, revised ed., vol.1, pp.534-557.
4. The Talmud and Midrash Rabbah refer to the martyrdom of R. Akiba and the other rabbis at this time, (b.Ab.Zar.17b, 18a; b.Ber.61b; Sanh.14a; Lam.R.2.1; Prov.R.1.13), but the first list of the Ten Martyrs occurs in the post-Talmudic midrash Elleh Ezkerah.
5. In the Acts of the Apostles, after the account of the apostles receiving the spirit at Pentecost their behaviour is explained by Peter in terms of the eschatological prophecy of Joel: 'For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day; but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "And in last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy..."'. Acts 2:15-17.
6. Wertheimer op.cit., vol.2, p.434.
7. See e.g. Ex.16:20; Is.14:11; 66:24.
8. For the most extensive treatment of this subject see, A.F.Segal, Two Powers in Heaven.
9. See also Gen.R.8.9; Ex.R.29.1; Deut.R.2.13. For a discussion of these passages see Segal, op.cit., pp.121-134.
10. Wisd.7:22.
11. 1 Enoch 69.14-21. The heterodox belief that Adam was God's helper in creation is corrected by the rabbis: 'Our rabbis taught: Adam was created on the eve of the sabbath. And why? so that the Sadducees could not say: The Holy One, blessed be He, had a partner in His work of creation'. t.Sanh. 8.7. See Segal, op.cit., pp.109-115.
12. Prov.8:22ff.
13. See M.R.James, The Apocryphal New Testament, pp.187-193.
14. The setting for this apocryphal text is the point in St John's

Gospel where, at the Last Supper (Jn 13:23ff), the beloved disciple asks which of his disciples will be the betrayer. The Book of John purports to provide the subsequent dialogue which is not reported in the Gospel.

15. Translation M.R.James, op.cit., p.190.
16. AB 5.7; see also AB 13.1 where God is all alone when the present world is destroyed, and there are no angels in the World to Come.
17. The sevenfold aspect of Gehenna appears in b.Sot. 10b: '...Why is my son (2 Sam.19) repeated eight times? Seven to raise him from the seven divisions of Gehinnom... '
18. See AB 1.1 and commentary.
19. See above pp.33-38.
20. Urbach, *The Sages*, vol.1, p.213.
21. See, e.g., AB 17.2-3.

9.1. Nun Samekh, Lamedh Kaph - Because he says to Satan, 'Flee, go into Gehenna. For you said, "I created by myself". Behold fire is your food, and Gehenna is your home.' As it is said, The wicked will return to Sheol etc. (Ps.9:17). Do not read 'will return', but 'the wicked will dwell in Sheol'. They will lose their strength, their might, their greatness, their pettiness, their wealth, their plenteousness, their pleasures, and their honour, and from their sovereignty, and from their kingship. And they have no more hope or existence in this world, as it is said, Let sinners be consumed from the world etc. (Ps.104:35). When does the praise of the Holy One, blessed be He, increase in the world? When the wicked are lost from the world, as it is said, When the wicked are lost there is a shout of joy. (Prov.11:10).

2. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Satan, 'Now what do you say before me?' [He said before him,] 'Lord of the Universe, go down from your height and stand beside us in the middle of Gehenna. If fire overpowers you and flames burn you up, behold you are like us. But if not, behold, you are like a king and we are like your servants.' Immediately the Holy One, blessed be He, went down from the high heavens and stood with them, as it is said, For the Lord will come into fire and his chariots like the storm wind etc. (Is.66:15).

3. Then they stand, the seven princes of Gehenna: Zaaphiel, prince of Sheol; Zaamiel, prince of Abaddon; Zaaziel, prince of the pit of

destruction; Aqriel, prince of heavy clay, Abdiel, prince of the gates of death; Aqalqaliel, prince of the gates of the shadow of death; and Nigrasgiel, prince of Gehenna. And they all fall upon their faces and prostrate themselves before the Holy One, blessed be He, and say: Arise God and let your enemies be scattered etc. (Num.10:35).

4. As soon as Satan sees that they are standing and prostrating themselves to the Holy One, blessed be He, immediately he is angry and gnashes his teeth at them, as it is said, The wicked will see and be angry etc. (Ps.112:10). They (the princes of Gehenna) grew strong with their fiery power and they swell (with anger) against them, against Satan and against the wicked. And the princes of Gehenna pursue them, and they strike them with three lashes and drive them from rivers of fire to rivers of hail, from rivers of hail to rivers of fire. And they throw them to the midst of the depths, and they fall and they are not able to stand because of the darkness and slipperiness, as it is said, Let their way be dark etc. (Ps.35:6).

5. And the Holy One, blessed be He, says to Satan, 'Now what do you say? For fire has no power against me.' He said before him, 'Lord of the Universe, wait for me one hour until I can stand upon my feet, and I will rest my mind from the war of fire for I cannot take any more.' He waits for him, and [he] stands upon his feet, and says to him, 'Now what do you say?' He said before him, 'Lord of the Universe, all these powers are not yours, for you have another authority, above your head which rescues you from this great fire and from this glow and flame and torch.'

6. Immediately he was filled with wrath and with indignation and anger against him and against them. And he heated up fire upon them, and the glow of Gehenna is like mountains, and burning coals like hills of torches. And he swallows up the angel of death, and all the destroying angels from the world, as it is said, He will swallow up death forever and the Lord will wipe etc. (Is.25:8).

7. After this he tears apart heaven and earth, one on top of the other, and destroyed the whole world, and returned them to Tohu and Bohu which is what it used to be, as it is said, Lift up your eyes to the heavens etc. (Is.51:6).

The chapter ends.

This chapter is to be taken with the previous chapter as it forms the second, and concluding, part of the judgment of Satan. In the previous chapter we were given an account of Satan's trial and the first stage of the punishments meted out by God to him and his angelic retinue. The theme of rivalry between God and Satan continues in this chapter, and once again God demonstrates the superiority of his power over that of Satan.

In our ms the alphabetical framework to this chapter gives us the letters ם"ן and ך"ל. As we have seen, in this part of the Midrash, the Tractate of Satan, the alphabetical pattern begins at the end of the alphabet and progresses through to the beginning. At this point we should be encountering the letters ם"ן and ך"ל. The similarity that exists between the letters ם and ן along with the fact that both letters are next to ך in the alphabet explains the confusion. It would seem that the scribe instinctively went from the letter ך to ן, which is the natural order of the alphabet, and misread the verb ןן. Wertheimer corrects the apparent error by replacing the letter ן with ם, and the verb ןן with םן.

The ms use of the verb ןן 'to flee', however, does make sense in the context of this passage since it explains that the wicked are to be removed from the world. God is saying to Satan that he should reside in Gehenna where he belongs rather than in the world with the rest of creation (1).



The other letters used in the structure of the chapter are ל and ך. These can be understood either as לך, or as לך. It is more usual to find the framework letters forming verbs rather than prepositional terms or even nouns. Bearing this in mind perhaps we should translate the opening line as follows: 'נ"ם לך" Because he says to Satan, "Flee, go into Gehenna...".

The words of God to Satan in AB 9.1, reminding him that he had claimed to have created Gehenna, refer us back to the previous chapter where Satan suggested that he was God's partner in creation. God ironically quotes Satan's own words back at him: 'For you said, "By myself I created." Behold fire is your food and Gehenna is your home'. If Satan is responsible for the creation of Gehenna then he should feel at home in its fiery midst. Ps.9:17 is given as the biblical prooftext for this idea with the advice that the verse should be understood to include the verb שׁוּב, 'to dwell', rather than the verb שׁוּב, 'to return'. This section continues with comments about the wicked in general, rather than Satan in particular. They are to be stripped of all their power and sovereignty. Reference to Ps.104:35 shows that, in the light of God's judgment, there is no future for the wicked on earth. Once the wicked have been removed from the world God will be praised more highly than ever before since all opposition will have been silenced.

In AB 9.2 Satan attempts to make a deal with God. If God will go down to the midst of Gehenna and prove that his power is greater than that of Satan, then Satan and his angels will be subject to his kingship. This bargain parallels that devised by God in the previous

chapter (2). There God promised Satan that if the fires of Gehenna overpowered him, that would prove that he was subject to God's sovereignty like the rest of the world. If he was unblemished by the fires, then God would be willing to share his authority with him. Here God accepts Satan's challenge and descends from the heavens to stand beside Satan and his retinue in Gehenna. Is.66:15 is cited to illustrate God's descent into the fire. The most natural way to understand this passage from Isaiah would be as a description of God bringing down fire as judgment upon the earth:

For behold, the Lord will come in fire, and his chariots like the stormwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire will the Lord execute judgment...

Our Midrash reads the preposition **ב** to mean 'into' in order to illustrate God's entrance into the fiery Gehenna.

When Satan challenges God, he promises he will recognise God as king if he withstands the fires of Gehenna. Earlier on in the Midrash, in chapter 4, God is called king in the context of the ascent of the divine presence, the Shekinah, from the earth to the seventh heaven at the beginning of the history of the world (3). The first stage of the ascent is prompted by the sin of Adam. God as king ascended to his throne in the heavens; now he descends from the heavens to display his kingship as the present world nears the end of its existence.

The seven princes of Gehenna stand in attendance as God arrives (AB 9.3). Two of these princes, Nigrasgiel and Zaaphiel, we

have come across already in chapter 7 when they played a part in the judgment of Sammael and Dubbiel (4). The names of the others reflect God's mood concerning his adversaries, for example: Zaamiel, 'the anger of God' (5); Aqriel, 'uprooter of God'; Abdiel, 'the servant of God'; Aqalqaliel, 'the crooked one of God' (6). These princes prostrate themselves in the presence of God and recite Num.10:35:

Arise, O Lord, and let thy enemies be scattered;  
and let them that hate thee flee before thee.

This verse includes the verb פָּלַח, 'to flee', which is the same verb that the ms forms out of the letters which make up part of the alphabetical framework to this chapter. The use of this verse also evokes a liturgical context in that it is the verse recited in the synagogue when the Ark is opened and the Torah scroll brought out.

Satan is angry when he sees the princes of Gehenna prostrating themselves before God (AB 9.4). This act alone proves that Satan could not have created even Gehenna since in Gehenna God's kingship alone is recognised by those who dwell there. God would seem to have won before the contest has begun. While God stands in the midst of Gehenna to prove that he can withstand any fires it can produce, the princes of Gehenna turn their attention to Satan and his retinue. Here again further proof is provided of God's sovereignty over Gehenna: no powers in Gehenna touch God as he stands in its midst, whereas Satan and his retinue are continuously tortured. The princes of Gehenna whip them, then pursue them from the extreme heat of rivers of fire to the extreme cold of rivers of hail. Finally they are thrown into the depths where it is so dark

that they cannot see and so slippery that they cannot stand. Their plight paints a miserable picture of pathetic creatures disorientated and floundering about in the depths of Gehenna, fulfilling the words of Ps.35:5-6:

Let them be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the Lord driving them on! Let their way be dark and slippery, with the angel of the Lord pursuing them!

Now God has won the challenge by withstanding the fires of Gehenna, he asks what Satan proposes to do (AB 9.5). Satan begs to be allowed one hour in which to regain his foothold and rest from the overpowering fire. This is allowed and when he has regained his composure he continues his defence. The content of Satan's argument makes it clear that he has fully recovered since he slanders God by accusing him of having the unfair advantage of outside help to aid him during his time in Gehenna. Satan cannot be referring to the princes of Gehenna who have been acting on behalf of God since he describes it as an authority above God's head. He would seem to be saying that there is another power in heaven protecting God from the fire. God is so repulsed by this suggestion that he destroys Gehenna and all its angelic powers (AB 9.6).

Then he rips heaven and earth up, one on top of the other (AB 9.7), until the whole world is destroyed and returned to the state of Tohu and Bohu as it had existed before he began his work of creation. Precisely the same phrase, **וַיִּשְׁרֹף שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ זֶה עַל גְּבוֹי**, occurs in AB.5.5 (7). There the explanation given for the total destruction of the world relates to God's supremacy over creation.

Earlier in that chapter God's creation and commissioning of the ministering angels was described. The supremacy of God is made evident by the Midrash's stress on the fact that God alone was responsible for the existence of each and every heavenly creature:

The Holy One, blessed be He, has formed with his little finger the features of the faces of every angel and every prince. After that he has blown into them spirit and breath, and he has placed them upon their feet, and he has opened their eyes. AB 5.2

As we noted in the previous chapter in relation to Satan's claim to be God's partner in creation, the point of this emphasis becomes clear in AB 5.7. There we are told that God totally destroys the world, including all the heavenly creatures, so that when he comes to create the new world it will be his work alone:

...not one of all those who stand before him in service have the opportunity to open their mouths to say, 'We, we created the new things of the world with the Holy One, blessed be He'.

Chapter 9 provides an explanation for God's concern. Satan has challenged God's supremacy over creation. In chapter 8 he had claimed to have been God's partner in creation. Now, in his final attack, he suggests that there is a heavenly creature that is greater than God. The reason for God's total destruction of the world in chapter 5 had remained obscure. Now it is made clear. When God comes to judge the world, Satan, originally a heavenly creature (8), questions the status of God as the sole source and king of creation.

God's reaction to Satan's suggestion is so extreme that we can

deduce that it strikes at the heart of the Jewish doctrine of creation. God's final proof that he alone created the world and that he alone rules the world is the destruction of the whole world: heaven and earth. How can there be a power in heaven above and apart from God when God can destroy heaven itself?

The idea that God is not supreme is reminiscent of gnostic speculation which abounded within and on the fringes of Christianity at least from the second century c.e. onwards. The Christian heretic Marcion is often reckoned amongst the gnostics (9), but he died circa 160 before gnosticism became a defined and recognisable tendency in the early church. Furthermore, it is unlikely that he could have agreed with the developed mythology typical of gnosticism. Thus the categorisation of Marcion as a fully fledged gnostic seems false. What he does share with the later gnostics is their dualism. For Marcion the God portrayed in Jewish scripture is the Demiurge. According to Marcion, this Demiurge who created the world was one who constantly changed his mind. He was fickle, cruel, despotic, and ignorant. This God is totally different from the Supreme God of Love revealed in the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth. Marcion also shares with the gnostics a rejection of the world of matter. This physical world is evil: the product and realm of the Demiurge. The Supreme God of Love resides in the realm of light. Jesus originated from that realm and not the earth. He only appeared to have a physical nature. His passion and death demonstrate the inferiority of the Demiurge in that he thought that death would defeat Jesus. Jesus' resurrection

from the dead proved for Marcion the superiority of the Supreme God of Love.

In our Midrash any suggestion that the God who created the world was not the absolute power in the universe is quashed when the same God passes his judgment and the whole cosmos, including the heavens and all their creatures and powers, is torn up and discarded (10).

In these two chapters, 8 and 9, which describe the trial and judgment of Satan, the author of the Midrash deals with two gnostic type speculations relating to God's role in creation and God's status in the divine hierarchy. God demonstrates that he created alone and, furthermore, that he is the supreme power in the universe. The events related in the first five chapters of the Midrash have now been explained. God created the heavens and the earth (11), the heavens for the creatures of heaven, the earth for the sake of Israel (12). But the creatures and Israel rebelled against him. Humanity began its rebellion with Adam the first human being, and successive generations simply followed his example (13). The heavenly creatures began their rebellion when they disagreed with God's decision to create humanity (14).

These first three chapters of the Tractate of Satan, in explaining the reasons for humanity's rebellion, lay the blame totally on Satan and his angels. In chapter 7 we were told about the sins of Sammael and Dubbiel in relation to Israel, but in chapter 8 we discover that Satan was at work all the time exacerbating the

situation. All of Satan's deeds are weighed in relation to his treatment of Israel. We know that his judgment will have cosmic implications since Israel alone provided God with the motivation to create the world. Satan has undermined creation, and once he has been judged, then God will have to re-create. This explains the creation of the World to Come described in chapter 6. Satan has been judged, all rebellious creatures in both heaven and earth have been utterly destroyed. Even death has been destroyed, and according to tradition it will never be part of the World to Come:

It is better for you to die the death of this world, even against your will, than to die the death of the World to Come, where if you will, you need not ever die. (15)

Now there is only God, but soon there will be the new world, inhabited only by the righteous remnant of Israel: creation has been perfected. Once Satan's judgment has been completed we have reached and have had explained to us the stage mentioned in chapter 5 where the heavens and the earth have been ripped to pieces.

This chapter ends with the heavens and the earth restored to Tohu and Bohu, the state in which it had existed before God had made the decision to begin creation (16). Tohu and Bohu are described at the very beginning of our Midrash as it sets the scene for the moment of creation:

At the same time the world was filled with water on water, wave on wave, gale on gale, tempest within tempest, storm wind within storm wind. AB 1.2.



This chapter has taken us to the point where God is ready to begin his creation of the World to Come. The chapter finishes with a quotation from Is.51:6. When we look at the full text of the passage from Isaiah we find that it is not an oracle of doom merely prophesying the end of the world, but an oracle of hope:

Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they that dwell in it will die like gnats; but my salvation will be for ever, and my deliverance will never be ended.

This passage from Isaiah occurs in the chapter describing the new heavens and the new earth in Pirke de R. Eliezer, thus giving it a context of new creation rather than judgment:

The sages say: The heavens and the earth are destined to pass away and be renewed. What is written concerning them? ...And the earth shall wax old like a garment (Is.51:6); just as a man spreads out his garment and folds it up, and again he unfolds it and puts it on and renews it, likewise, the Holy One, blessed be He, in the future will fold up the earth and again he will spread it out and put it in its place like a garment. PRE 51.

From looking at the biblical text, and an example of its interpretation, we can see that this chapter ends, not with despair and gloom, but in a mood of optimism and encouragement. Satan and the wicked are destroyed, the present world has been torn in shreds, and the righteous can confidently await their reward in the World to Come.

## Notes

1. See AB 2.1 and commentary where God causes the waters to flee from him.
2. AB 8.6.
3. AB 4.1-4.
4. See AB 7.10 and commentary.
5. It is interesting to note that the verb which appears in Zaamiel's name, זאמיאל, also appears in Is.66:14 the verse immediately preceding that just quoted by the Midrash.
6. The closest biblical parallel to this noun occurs in Ps.125:25 where it is also found in the context of God's judgment. There God leads the wicked away to leave Israel cleansed and in peace.
7. See commentary to AB 5.5.
8. See Job 1:6ff.
9. On Marcion see, e.g., H. von Campenhausen, The Formation of the Christian Bible, E. Hennecke, N.T. Apocrypha, vols 1 & 2., also, A.F.Segal, Two Powers, pp.234-259.
10. This refutation of any possibility that there could be any deity equal or superior to God can be compared to a passage quoted by Segal in Two Powers, p.120, in his discussion of the 'two powers heresies'. The passage is from Tanhuma Kedoshim 4:2: 'Say to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, You shall be holy for I am Holy (Lev.19:2). The Holy One, blessed be He told them, "Be holy for I am Holy in every matter. Look at what is written: For God is Holy (pl.)" (Josh.24:19). What is the meaning of For God is Holy? This verse gave an opportunity for the heretics for it appeared like two powers. The heretics asked R.Simlai about For God is Holy: "You yourselves don't say that he is one power, rather there are two powers." He said to them, "What fools the world contains! Look at what is written: For He is a Holy God. If it had said: "They are holy gods", you might have thought there were two powers.'" Segal draws attention to other versions of this tradition, e.g. j.Ber.12b; b.Sanh.38b; Gen.R.8.9; Ex.R.29.1, see Two Powers, p.120, n.2.
11. AB 1 and 2.
12. See AB 2.5 and 3.3.

13. AB 4.5-6.
14. See AB 4.1 and commentary.
15. ARN 32, 36a.
16. Cf. 4 Ez.7:30, also Bar.3:7; Sybilline Oracles IV.176ff.

10.1. Yodh Tet, Heth Zayin - Because the hand of a good man restores to the World to Come: workers of Torah, fulfillers of commandments, givers of charity, doers of good deeds. And for their sake he created the World to Come, to repay them with a good portion, as it is said, How great is your goodness etc. (Ps.31:19).

2. In the Time to Come the Holy One, blessed be He, sits upon a throne of righteousness, as it is said, And the Lord of Hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God etc. (Is.5:16). And he calls each and every righteous one by name, and gives to him, to each and every one, a share, a good reward according to his deeds, as it is said, But you take courage and do not let your hands be weak, for there is a reward for (your work). (2 Chron.15:7).

3. And [to] each and every righteous one he gives a garment of salvation, and dresses him with his own hands, as it is said, For he has dressed me with garments of salvation etc. (Is.61:10).

4. Each and every righteous one he wraps in his robe of righteousness, as it is said, I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, and [my soul] will exult etc. (Is.61:10).

5. To each and every righteous one he gives a diadem of honour from his crown, and he crowns him, as it is said, You will be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord. (Is.62:3).

6. To each and every righteous one he gives a royal turban from the turban of his kingdom, and wraps it on him, as it is said, And a royal turban in the hand of your God. (Is.62:3).

7. To each and every righteous one he gives one of his horses and his chariots, and he makes him ride it, as it is said, Behold a chariot of fire and horses of fire. (2 Kgs 2:11).

8. To each and every righteous one he gives a sceptre of fire, from the sceptres of fire which are in his hand, and he hangs it beneath his hand with his own hand, as it is said, You will take this rod in your hand etc. (Ex.4:17).

9. To each and every righteous one he gives three hundred and sixty five ministering angels for service, and runners like the servants before him and behind him, as it is said, Kings will see and arise etc. (Is.49:7). Do not read 'kings', but 'angels', ministering angels, princes, princes of the heavenly beings.

10. For each and every righteous one he builds two palaces of emerald and sapphire and onyx, and each one is six hundred and sixty five cubits by four cubits, as it is said, The wisdom of women has built her house etc. (Prov.14:1). 'Wisdom' this is the Holy One, blessed be He, for he gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to understanding men, as it is said, He gives wisdom to the wise etc. (Dan.2:21).

11. And he founded with wisdom this world, and with understanding

the World to Come, as it is said, The Lord with wisdom founded etc. (Prov.3:19). From where is it proved that this world is called 'earth', and the World to Come 'the heavens'? As it is said, In the beginning God created the heavens etc. (Gen.1:1). If this be so, why is it said, On the day when the Lord God made earth and heavens. (Gen.2:4)? But it teaches that 'in the beginning' the Holy One, blessed be He, created the World to Come, as it is said, 'heavens'. And he places them to one side, and after that he created this world, as it is said, God, God the Lord spoke and will call. (Ps.50:1). 'He spoke and he called the world' is not said here but, 'He spoke and he called the earth.' And the Holy One, blessed be He, hid the World to Come from the eye of every living creature, even from the eye of the ministering angels, and they will not see it until the time of the World to Come, as it is said, No eye has seen, O God. (Is.64:3). 'He made' is not said, but 'he will make'. For he will divide it by reward, as it is said, Blessed are all who wait for him. (Is.30:18).

The chapter ends.

The previous chapter ended on a note of optimism insofar as the judgment and destruction of the present world could be seen as the penultimate act of God before his creation of the World to Come. The contents of this chapter justify that optimism since they describe the rewards awaiting the righteous in the new world. The first pair of letters forming the chapter's alphabetical structure give us the words  $\aleph$  'hand', and  $\beth$  'good'; and the phrase, 'the hand of a good man'. The second pair of letters,  $\daleth$ , form part of the verb  $\aleph\daleth$  'to return' (Hiph. 'to restore'). The four letters together promise the restoration to the righteous remnant of all they deserve (1).

The righteous remnant comprises: those who study the Torah; the charitable; and those who do good deeds. It is for their sake that God created the World to Come (AB 10.1). This idea is reminiscent of the time when God created the present world. According to Midrash Aleph Beth that had been created for the sake of Israel (2). The righteous are described as individuals who study the Torah and keep the commandments perfectly. Again this takes us back to the early chapters of the Midrash where the Torah's rôle was already central before it had been given to Moses on Sinai. In chapter 2 the relationship between Moses and Torah begins when God brings out the pre-existent soul of Moses from beneath the Throne of Glory to be the bridegroom for the Torah (3). In chapter 3 we are told that God created the present world only for the sake of Israel because it is Israel alone who will be given and who will respect God's Torah:

I did not create my world except for the sake of Israel...For they practise the Torah and fulfil the commandments. For the world does not exist except by their merit, since the reciting of the Torah does not cease from their lips for one hour. AB 3.3.

The subsequent sins of Israel have resulted in the creation of a righteous remnant, who alone have prompted the creation of the World to Come, and who alone will inhabit it (4).

Having described the qualifications required to be part of the righteous remnant, the Midrash continues by describing their reward. Each righteous one is given individual attention by God (5); and his reward corresponds to his behaviour in the present world. The fact that the righteous are graded would seem to imply that not all their deeds have been righteous ones or are equally meritorious, and yet there is no question of punishment for any unrighteous deed committed. A saying attributed to R. Akiba explains this anomaly

...For the righteous he collects payment in this world for the modicum of misdeeds which they have committed, in order to give them a good reward in the Time to Come, while he gives abundant peace to the wicked in this world, paying them for the modicum of good deeds which they have done, so as to inflict punishment upon them in the Time to Come. Lev.R.27.1.

Illustrations are taken from Is.61:10 and 62:3 (6) to describe how God will dress the righteous in the Time to Come (7): a robe of righteousness (8), a diadem of honour (9), and a royal turban (10). In the Christian apocalyptic text Revelation, the righteous martyrs await their full resurrection under the heavenly altar. They must



wait there until the full number of martyrs have joined them. In the meantime they are given a white robe to wear. In the Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah it is stated even more clearly that while the righteous may wear their heavenly robe at their death, they must wait to be further clothed with honour. From its Christian perspective the text interprets the life of Christ in eschatological terms. It is at the point of his glorification in heaven that the righteous of Israel receive their rewards:

And he took me up into the seventh heaven...And there I saw all the righteous from the time of Adam onwards...And there I saw Enoch and all who were with him, stripped of their robes of the flesh; and I saw them in their robes of above, and they were like the angels who stand in their great glory. But they were not sitting on their thrones, nor were their crowns of glory on them...Then (after the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ) indeed they will receive their robes and their thrones and their crowns, when he has ascended into the seventh heaven. Martyrdom of Is. 9:6-18.

The idea that the righteous should be crowned occurs in the Dead Sea Scrolls (11), the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (12), and the New Testament (13). Once the righteous have been dressed, God gives each of them a horse and chariot; he places in their hands sceptres of fire; and each one is given three hundred and sixty five ministering angels for his personal service. Finally, for each of the righteous God builds two palaces of precious stones. The idea that precious stones are to feature in the reward of the righteous in the Time to Come is beautifully illustrated in a story related in Ex.R.52.3:

The story is told of R. Simeon b. Halafta, that he once came home just before the Sabbath and

found that he had no food for that day, so he went outside the city and prayed to God, with the result that a precious stone dropped down for him from heaven. He sold this to a jeweller and bought with the money provisions for the Sabbath. When his wife asked him, 'Where did you get all these?' he replied: 'God has provided them.' She said, 'If you will not tell me where these things came from I will not touch a morsel.' He then told her the whole story...But she replied: 'I will not taste anything till you promise me to return the precious stone as soon as Sabbath ends.' When he asked her the reason, she replied: 'Do you wish that (in Paradise) your table will lack good things, while that of your colleagues will be laden with them?'...He returned the precious stone to heaven...As soon as he stretched out his hand to restore it to heaven an angel descended and took it from him. Why? Because the reward for Torah is only in the life to come.

As we were told at the beginning of this chapter, the righteous have gained their reward through their faithful observance of the Torah. Even when the Midrash seems to branch off into fantastic descriptions of the riches and majesty awaiting the righteous in the World to Come, the Torah remains central. This is evident in AB 10.10 where the measurements given for the two palaces of emerald sapphire and onyx created for each and every righteous individual which include mention of four cubits hence fulfilling the Torah prescription concerning the minimum space required for a Sabbath dwelling (14).

The Midrash refers us to a passage from 2 Kings to explain God's gift to the righteous of horses and chariots (AB 10.7). If we look at the biblical context we find it concerns the prophets Elijah and Elisha, in particular, Elijah's translation to the heavens:

And as they still went on and talked, behold a

chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it and he cried, 'My father, my father! the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!' And he saw him no more. 2 Kgs 2:11-12

These verses seem to be taken as a prophecy: the righteous of Israel riding through the skies in heavenly chariots in the Time to Come.

The Midrash interprets Is.49:7 as a reference to the righteous remnant (AB 10.9). Although it is usual in Jewish literature to interpret the servant corporately, this is usually done in relation to Israel, the whole nation, rather than the righteous few (15).

Our Midrash differs again from the usual interpretation of the 'kings' in this verse. These are normally seen as the foreign nations conquered and made subservient at the eschaton by the victory of the Messiah. But here they are understood as angels given to the righteous as servants in the Time to Come. Each and every righteous individual is to have three hundred and sixty five angels, one for every day of the year.

This interpretation reintroduces the theme of rivalry between the angels and humanity which has been evident in previous chapters (16). The angels had argued against God's plan to create humanity; they had been smug when humanity rebelled against God; they had rejoiced when God moved his Shekinah away from the earth to dwell with them in the heavens; Satan, Sammael and Dubbiel, along with

their wicked retinue, had constantly stood in the way of God's covenant with his people. Now, in the Time to Come, God's covenant with humanity, his relationship with Israel, can be renewed because the righteous have justified God's decision to create humanity at the beginning of the world's history. The very existence of a righteous remnant that have stayed faithful to God through their keeping of his Torah prove the angels wrong. As part of the reward of the righteous the same heavenly creatures who had dared to criticise God for creating humanity, the ministering angels, are to be humanity's servants. The reward for the righteous involves at the same time the punishment for the angels.

It is unusual to find such a detailed account of the appearance of the righteous in the World to Come (16a). The general subject of the eschatological rewards of the righteous is something about which the rabbis do not encourage speculation. The biblical verse often quoted to reinforce this tendency is Is.64:3. For example:

God said to him (Moses): 'I will reveal to you the reward of the righteous which I will bestow upon them in the millennium.' R. Assi said: 'The prophets beheld the banquet prepared (for the righteous) in Paradise, but did not behold the reward they would receive, for it says, The eye hath not seen, O God, beside Thee, what He will do for him that waits for Him (Is.64:3), and David also said: Oh how abundant is Thy goodness, which Thou hast hidden from them that fear Thee (Ps.31:20).''  
Ex.R.45.5-6.

All the rewards mentioned by our Midrash allocated to each and every righteous one all share the same characteristic: they are normally things by which God is recognised rather than human beings or even angels. In a passage from Midrash Rabbah we find

most of these things discussed in relation to Ex.6:1 (17). In that verse we are told that Moses is to represent God before the Pharaoh. This prompts the rabbis to discuss other examples in the biblical text where human beings are associated with things normally only associated with God. For example: Solomon sits on a throne; Elijah rides up to heaven on a whirlwind; Moses holds God's sceptre; the Messiah will wear a crown; Israel wears the mantle of God; Moses bears the name of God.

In our Midrash these unique occasions when a human being bears a divine characteristic are drawn together, and many of these characteristics become possessions of the righteous in the Time to Come. Like God seated on the Throne of Glory, they are to have angels, 'princes of the heavenly beings' (AB 10.9), as their servants, before and behind them. It would seem that God is intent on sharing to the fullest extent his glory and majesty with the righteous. They are to be given the highest status imaginable to human minds: above the angels, with nothing between them and the presence of God. This picture is reminiscent of the words of Ps.8:4-7:

What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him? Yet thou hast made him little less than God, and dost crown him with glory and honour. Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands. thou hast put all things under his feet.

Perhaps this status given to the righteous reveals more than anything else God's love for people who have devoted themselves to living by his Torah. They remain the pinnacle and reason for his work of creation in this world, and, more especially, in the World to

Come. How can the people of Israel resist keeping God's Torah in the light of the rewards awaiting them in the Time to Come?

This chapter ends with a discussion on the subject of the timing of the creation of the World to Come. This discussion has occurred twice before in the first part of the Midrash, and on each occasion a different conclusion was drawn. In chapter 3 the creation of the universe of the World to Come takes place at the same time as the creation of the present universe (18). At creation both universes are suspended beneath the arms of God. Conversely, in chapter 5 we read that the creation of the eschatological universe is something that only takes place once the present universe has been destroyed by God (19). This ensures that nothing is in existence that could challenge God's rôle as sole creator and king of the new worlds (20). The discussion on the subject we find in this chapter seems to follow the conclusion in chapter 5.

The discussion begins with an interpretation of Prov.3:19:

The Lord with wisdom founded the earth; with  
understanding he established the heavens.

Here it is understood that 'earth' refers to this world, and 'heavens' to the World to Come. The question is raised: 'From where is it proved that this world is called 'earth' and the World to Come 'the heavens?', but it remains unanswered. The order found in the verse from Proverbs, of the earth followed by the heavens, is taken to mean that this world was created before the World to Come. In reply Gen.1:1 is introduced into the argument which suggests the opposite order: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the

earth'. This reference could be understood to carry more weight than the verse from Proverbs since it is taken from the Torah rather than the Writings, and is countered by reference to another verse from Torah:

On the day when the Lord God made earth and heavens. Gen.2:4.

This side of the argument is in full agreement with the order of creation presented in chapter 5. But again reference is made to Gen.1:1 where it states that in the beginning God created 'the heavens' that is, the universe of the World to Come. Once created it is put on one side and hidden away, particularly from the eyes of the ministering angels. This idea is justified by a quotation from Ps.50:

The Mighty One, God the Lord, spoke and will call the earth. Ps.50:1.

The Midrash notes a distinction between past and future tenses in this verse. The contrast shows that there is a separation, or time lapse, between the creation of this world and that of the World to Come. This allows God to create the World to Come on his own and put it in isolation, so that it cannot be tampered with or contaminated by any heavenly creature that may want to undermine God's reward for the righteous. Is.64:4 is introduced to reinforce this interpretation:

No eye has seen, O God, beside you, what he will make for him that waits for him.

This supplies the necessary evidence for the hiddenness of the World to Come, but it also reopens the argument over the timing of

the creation of the World to Come. Precisely this verse was used in chapter 5 to prove that the story of the creation of this world, followed by its subsequent judgment and destruction, and the creation of the World to Come, are sequential (20). The verse states that God 'will make', rather than 'made' in the context of the reward of the righteous. Thus this chapter concludes as chapter 5 does that God will create the World to Come in the future, after this world has been destroyed. The new world will be a new and fresh creation so there can be no possibility of its contamination from creatures that exist in the present world.

Despite the fact that Satan and all the wicked angels have been destroyed, they still cast their shadow over the creation of the World to Come. It would almost seem as though God's power is limited since the creation of the World to Come apparently has to be delayed until this world and its evil contents have been destroyed. However, this scenario has a useful part to play in a context where the forces against God appear to be in the ascendancy. Their judgment is essential if justice is to be seen to be done, and only then will the righteous enjoy life in the World to Come to the full.



1. For a discussion of rabbinic debates on the question of the righteous, see Urbach, op.cit., vol.1, pp.483-523.
2. AB 3.3.
3. AB 2.10.
4. The idea that this world was created for the righteous can be found in e.g. 2 Bar.14:19,15:7,21:24; 4 Ez.9:13.
5. This direct concern demonstrated by God is reminiscent of his creation of the angels described in AB 5.2 where the features on each angel's face were traced out by God's little finger.
6. Other biblical passages cited as prooftexts for the crowning of the righteous in Jewish literature are Is.28:5 and the LXX version of Ez.28:12.
7. PR 37 is based on Is.61:10, and it interprets the verse exclusively in eschatological terms, e.g. it describes the way in which God has decked the Messiah for his advent in to the world, it describes Israel dressed in glory parading in front of the foreign nations.
8. See Rev.6:9-11.
9. God gives each righteous one a diadem from his own crown and crowns him. In b.Ber.17a the righteous sit in the World to Come with crowns on their heads basking in the radiance of the Shekinah.
10. These passages appear together in Deut.R.2.37, also in the context of the resurrection of the righteous of Israel.
11. 1QS 4.7; 1QH 9.25.
12. See e.g.: 2 Bar.15:8; Sir.45:12; Wisd.5:16; Ascen.Is.7:22, 9:24; Test.Ben.4:1; Odes of Sol.1:1-5,9:8-11; Gk.Apoc.Ez.6:17.
13. 1 Cor.9:25; 2 Tim.4:8; Jas 1:12; 1 Pet.5:4; Rev.2:10, 3:11.
14. Cf m.Shab.11.3-4.
15. See e.g. Ex.R.15.17 where the servant who has been despised is Israel and the men of Gog are the kings and princes who will pay homage to Israel.

16. See AB 4.1; 5.7; also chaps 7,8, and 9 - the judgment of Satan, Sammael and Dubbiel.
- 16a. See also AB 6 and 17.
17. Ex.R.8.1.
18. AB 3.5 and commentary.
19. AB 5.5ff and commentary. 20. This idea is bound up with Satan's accusations that God is neither sole creator (AB 8.5 and commentary), nor the supreme power in the heavens (AB 9.5 and commentary).

11.1. Vav He, Daleth Gimel - Leviathan, because he was prepared from the six days of creation to make a feast for the righteous in the World to Come, as it is said, In that day the Lord will punish with his hard sword. (Is.27:1).

2. When the Holy One, blessed be He, brings him from the midst of the great sea, he will bind him with a hand of judgment as far as his palate, and will press down his tongue with a rope, as it is said, Can you draw out Leviathan etc. (Job 40:25).

3. How does he bring him out? The Holy One, blessed be He, sent to Gabriel to bring him from the midst of the great sea. He puts rings in his jaws and presses down his tongue with a thick rope whose width is two thousand miles - about the size of the great sea, as it is said, And his body was like Tarshish. (Dan.10:6). And his length was beyond comprehension and beyond number.

4. But when he pulls him and brings him out, the strength of Leviathan prevails over Gabriel and he swallows him, until the Holy One, blessed be He, stands over him to help him. He brings him out of the midst of the great sea of the great deep, and brings him before the righteous. And he slaughters him before them with his own hand, as it is said, Let him who made him draw near with his sword. (Job 40:19). As soon as the righteous see the Holy One, blessed be He, standing and slaughtering him himself, immediately they open their mouths and shout with joy before him, as it is said,

Come, let us shout with joy to the Lord etc. (Let us rejoice in the rock of our salvation). (Ps.95:1).

5. After this the Holy One, blessed be He, sends to Gabriel and to Michael to bring the two Behemoths from the midst of the thousand hills, as it is said, Behemoths on a thousand hills. (Ps.50:10). Then Gabriel (and Michael) go and search after the Behemoths, and as soon as they see them, they run after them and try to catch them. But they are not able to catch them and they flee from before them. The power of the Behemoths increases and they run after them: the male after Gabriel, the female after Michael. And they overtake them and knock them down with eighteen thousand...

Pages of the ms are missing.

11b.1. '...Gog and Magog. Ephraim my first born, come, sit at my right hand until I bring down the power of the serried ranks of Gog and Magog, your enemies, beneath your footstool.' As it is said, The Lord says to my lord, Sit at my right hand etc. (Ps.110:1).

2. How will the battles of Gog and Magog [be conducted]? It teaches that the Messiah will come upon Israel, and he will bring the exiles of Israel into Jerusalem, and he builds up Jerusalem, as it is said, The Lord builds up Jerusalem, he gathers the exiles of Israel. (Ps.147:2). And all the kings of the nations of the world come to the gate of the Messiah. And they are in attendance before him, and they bring him a present, as it is said, At that time gifts will be

brought to the Lord etc. (Is.18:7). And it is said, And open the gates etc. (Is.60:11).

3. And all the nations of the world will come and ask the Israelites to be their foster-fathers and wet nurses, as it is said, Kings will be your foster-fathers etc. (and queens your wet nurses with their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you, and lick the dust of your feet). (Is.49:23). And not only this, but even more, for they lick the dust from beneath the feet of Israel. And they kiss them like this serpent, for he licks the dust with his mouth and his tongue, as it is said, They will lick the dust like a serpent, like the crawling things of the earth etc. (Mic.7:17).

4. And Israel will dwell on their land in safety, in the land of Israel in peace and rest, and they will be at ease for forty years.

5. And after forty years Gog and Magog will come upon the land of Israel and have three battles with the Messiah and with Israel in the month of Tebeth, as it is said, And the Lord said, 'Month one, two, three. ( ? ). One battle on the tenth of Tebeth, and one battle on the thirtieth of Tebeth.

6. How will Gog of the land of Magog come? It teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, stirs up the spirit of Gog and Magog, and the inclination [for] treasure and glory, silver and gold and precious stones and pearls, property and booty, captives and booty, overpowers them, as it is said, Who dwell at the navel of the earth, Sheba and Dedan, merchants of Sidon. (Ez.38:12-13). And for seven

years great armies are gathered, and thirty great peoples, officers and knights and riders of horses and men bearing shields, cuirasses and spears, men wielding bows and firing arrows, beyond comprehension and beyond number.

7. At the end of seven years a great assembly goes up and a great army with horses and chariots, with bow and with arrow, with cuirass and shield, and with three sided shield and spear to the land of Israel from the farthest places of the north, like a storm, and they cover all the land of Israel, four hundred miles, like a cloud which comes to cover the land, as it is said, You will go up like a storm etc. (you will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your hordes and many peoples with you). (Ez.38:9). And it will leap for them over one thousand five hundred miles of land in one hour, as it is said, Like a cloud covering the land etc. (Ez.38:9). As a cloud goes five hundred miles in one hour, so it leaps over the land for them, so that the distance that they walk is five hundred miles in one hour.

8. As soon as they reach the land of Israel, the nations of the world hear and go up with them, many peoples and a great assembly, and they subdue all Israel. The first ten days they carry off much booty and take much great spoil. And they gather property and possessions, sheep and cattle, camels and asses, horses and she-asses, male and female captives. The middle ten days they seize and subdue cities and towns, provinces and cities that are in the land of Israel. And they gather silver and gold, precious stones and pearls, beyond comprehension and beyond number. And for the last

ten days they come and dwell by the gates of Jerusalem, and they carry into exile half the city of Jerusalem, as it is said, Half the city will go out etc. (into exile, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city). (Zech.14:2).

9. Then the Messiah goes out from Jerusalem to make war with them, and all the righteous with him, a great assembly. and the Messiah issues a decree against them, and then a thousand thousand of them and ten thousand times ten thousand will die, as it is said, And with the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked. (Is.11:4).

10. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, comes down from the highest high heavens and the ministering angels with him, as it is said, And the Lord, my God, will come and all his holy ones with him etc. (Zech.14:5). And he makes war, he and the ministering angels, with Gog and Magog, as it is said, And the Lord will go forth and fight against the nations etc. (as when he fights on a day of battle). (Zech.14:3).

11. How are the battles of Gog and Magog conducted? It teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, made war with them with six methods of war, and these are: with pestilence and with blood and flood rain and stones of crystal and with fire and with sulphur. As it is said, I will punish him with pestilence and with blood etc. (Ez.38:22).

12. 'Pestilence' - this is the angel of death whom he gives power over their lives in that hour, as it is said, Pestilence went before

him etc. (Hab.3:5). 'Blood' this is their prince who is like blood, whom he throws down from heaven, as it is said, I will give portents in heaven and on earth etc. (Joel 3:3). And whence that there is no punishment except the sentence of judgment? As it is said, The Lord will punish with his sword etc. (Is.27:1). And whence that in the beginning he threw their prince from heaven? As it is said, On that day the Lord will punish the host of the height in the height etc. (Is.24:21). 'And flood rain and hailstone' - these are the rains of wrath and the rains of grief, for the world is not able to endure them even one hour, as it is said, Behold the storm of the Lord. Wrath (has gone forth and a whirling tempest, it will burst upon the head of the wicked). (Jer.23:19). 'And stones of crystal' - these are stones of snow and hailstones, stones of snow like mountains and hailstones like hills, which the Holy One, blessed be He, throws down upon them in that hour like the time of the three wars he made with stones of snow and hailstones when he punished the Egyptians. He rained upon them stones of snow and hailstones like mountains and hills, as it is said, There was hail and fire flaming up continuously etc. (Ex.9:23). 'There was hail'-these are hailstones. 'And fire flaming up continuously' in the midst of the hail,-these are stones of snow. Stones of snow in gematria: three hundred and thirty three miles; hailstones: two hundred and six miles.

13. And as soon as Moses spread out his two hands in prayer towards heaven, immediately Gabriel, the angel of fire, and Bardiel, the angel of hail, came down with four hundred and ninety six thousand myriads of ministering angels and took hold of all those stones of snow and hailstones, and he did not allow them to reach



the ground, as it is said, (And Moses went forth from the city, from Pharaoh, and stretched out his hands to the Lord, and the thunder and the hail ceased) And the rain no longer poured to the earth. (Ex.9:33). And they stood between the earth and the firmament in the storm wind and in the gale wind, and held them in their hands until the day of the war with the Canaanites arrived, until the Holy One, blessed be He, makes war with them, as it is said, And the Lord threw down great (stones) from heaven upon them etc. (Josh.10:11).

14. In the 'fire' - this is the fire of the river Dinur. Man is not able to stand nearer to it than three hundred and sixty five thousand miles because its heat is stronger than all the fires. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, fills his hands with fire from the river Dinur and throws them at them, at Gog and Magog and at his hordes. And they are each changed into sparks; two sparks of fire are changed and refined in each one. Two enter this one's nose, and two in that one's. Their breath is burned but not their bodies, because all the creatures of the field and all the birds of the heavens are invited for that day to eat their flesh and drink their blood, as it is said, And you, son of man, thus says the Lord God, speak to the birds of every etc. (Ez.39:7). And it says, The flesh of the mighty you shall eat, and the blood of the princes of the earth. (Ez.39:18). And you shall eat fat until you are filled, and drink their blood until you are drunk at the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you. (Ez.39:19).

15. 'And with sulphur' - this is sulphur, the same kind as (used in)

the judgment of Sodom, as it is said, Sulphur and salt burned etc. (Deut.29:22). It teaches that at that hour the Holy One, blessed be He, caused sulphur to rain upon them from the heavens, and fire burns in them. And the hair of their heads is scorched, the hair of their flesh and the hair of their beards, the hair of their cattle and all those who possess hair, the hair of their horses, the hair of their riders, the hair of what they owned and their cattle, and everything with them that has hair, seven days and seven nights until the whole world sees them and asks about them and says, 'What is the nature of this fire which is kept burning in the west seven days and seven nights?' And they will say to them, These are Gog and Magog who came upon Ephraim, the righteous Messiah of the Holy One, blessed be He, upon Israel his people, to make war with them. And the Holy One, blessed be He, battled on their [Israel's] behalf, and he rained upon them fire and sulphur, and he burned them, their breath, where they stood.' As it is said, I will send fire upon Magog and those who dwell securely in the coastlands, and they will know that I am the Lord. (Ez.38:23).

16. Then the whole world will be afraid and will tremble because they hear the might and the greatness of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is said, And I will magnify myself and sanctify myself etc. (Ez.38:23). 'And I will magnify myself' - this is the battle of the Red Sea, as it is said, And Israel feared etc. (Ex.14:31). 'And sanctify myself' - this is the battle of Sisera, as it is said, From the heavens they battled etc. (Judg.5:20). 'And I will make myself known' - this is the battle of Sennacherib, as it is said, And the angel of the Lord went forth and slew etc. (a hundred and eighty five

thousand in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold these were all dead bodies). (2 Kgs 19:35). ('In the sight of many nations' - in the days of Gog and Magog, nine in gematria. 'Many' - seventy nations.) 'And they will know that I am the Lord' - this is the battle of Gog, as it is said, The Lord will go forth and battle against those nations etc. (Zech.14:3).

The chapter ends.

Chapter 11 contains one of the major problems regarding the integrity of our text. As we mentioned above (1), it could well comprise three chapters: 11, 11a, and 11b. Chapter 11 based on the letters ג"ד ה"ו; 11a, which is completely missing, the letters א"ב, - which would have ended the second alphabet combination (ה to א); and 11b which is incomplete immediately following the missing section. If we possessed the opening phrase to this last chapter it would have begun with the letters ב"ש, א"ה. These two pairs of letters begin the third alphabet combination, taking the last letter with the first. This reconstruction is borne out by the words spoken by God to the Messiah, בש אה, '...come, sit...'.

In Chapter 11 the primordial monsters Leviathan and Behemoth are the objects of God's eschatological judgment. They are the last remaining enemies of God to be defeated. They would not have been destroyed when God tore up the heavens and the earth because, although created by God, they, particularly Leviathan, are associated with the primordial waters of chaos: Tohu and Bohu. In AB 11b the subject moves to the enemies of the Messiah who are confronted in battle: the eschatological battle between him and the armies of Gog and Magog.

The two pairs of letters that form the alphabetical basis for AB 11 are ג"ד, ה"ו. It is not immediately clear how these letters are incorporated into the opening words of the narrative, which is where we usually find them in each chapter. The letter ו does

appear in Leviathan's name, לִוְיָתָן, but not prominently. The letter ך occurs in the term אֶלֶךְ 'because it...', but the same term appears at the beginning of almost every chapter. Possibly it stands for the tetragrammaton which occurs in the first biblical quotation of the chapter, Is.27:1. When we encountered the letter ך first, in chapter 2, we came across the same problem (3). The subject of that chapter was creation and since the letter ך traditionally is the letter with which God created the world it was possible to throw light on its rôle in the chapter. In this case, if we could conclude that the letter stands for the tetragrammaton, then together the two letters ך and ך would stand for Leviathan and God respectively. This would make sense since part of the chapter deals with the slaughter of Leviathan by the hand of God. There does not appear to be any use made of the second pair of letters ך"ך. We could assume that their interpretation belongs to the missing last section of the chapter. These same letters were also omitted in the first alphabet combination א to ך (3).

The chapter opens with God's plan to make a feast for the righteous in the World to Come. We are told that this was God's intention from the beginning: the feast was prepared during the six days of creation. The Midrash is not clear on the connection between Leviathan and this long awaited feast, but reference to other midrashic material about the sea monster Leviathan clarifies our text. One early example of midrash concerning Leviathan includes the myth that at the time of the advent of the Messiah the primordial monsters Leviathan and Behemoth will appear and be food for the righteous remnant:

...Behemoth will reveal itself from its place, and Leviathan will come from the sea, the two great monsters which I created on the fifth day of creation and which I have kept until that time. And they will be nourishment for all who are left. 2 Bar.29:4.

In the Talmud we are told that originally God had created two Leviathans: the male and female of the species:

...Leviathan the fleeing serpent and Leviathan the twisting serpent he created male and female; and had they mated with one another they would have destroyed the whole world. What did the Holy One, blessed be He do? He castrated the male and killed the female preserving it in salt for the righteous in the world to come; for it is written: And he will slay the dragon that is in the sea. (Is.27:1). b.B.B.74b.

The biblical verse which forms the background to this Talmudic passage, and which appears in our Midrash is Is.27:1:

In that day the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.

Because Leviathan's name appears twice it is assumed that there were two Leviathans. Such dualism is sometimes taken to signify this world and the World to Come (4). One Leviathan was killed during the six days of creation and the other will be killed in the World to Come.

The idea of the righteous consuming Leviathan during an eschatological banquet finds its basis in a passage from Job, translating יָכְרוּ עֲלָיו חֲבֵרִים as 'Companions will make a banquet of

it' (Job 40:30, Eng.Job 41:6). The Talmud explains this translation as follows:

Rabbah said in the name of R.Johanan: The Holy One, blessed be He, will in the time to come make a banquet for the righteous from the flesh of Leviathan; for it is said: Companions will make a banquet of it (Job 40:30). בָּרָךְ must mean a banquet; for it is said: And he prepared for them a great banquet and they ate and drank (2 Kgs 6:23). b.B.B.75a. (5)

Midrash Aleph Beth does not make it clear whether there are two Leviathans present at this stage. It states only that the righteous are about to partake of their banquet and that God has drawn Leviathan out of the Great Sea in readiness to be slain (6). When God has slain Leviathan and turns his attention from the sea to the land (AB 11.5), there are two monsters, two Behemoths mentioned, in line with midrashic tradition. In order to maintain a literary parallelism in the chapter we should assume that the Midrash is inferring the tradition of two Leviathans as well as two Behemoths.

The description of the manner in which God draws Leviathan from the sea is based on Job 40:25 (7):

Can you draw out Leviathan בַּחֹךְ, or press down his tongue with a cord?

The Midrash understands the word בַּחֹךְ to mean 'with its palate', rather than the normal translation, 'with a fish-hook'.

Having described how God catches the sea monster, the Midrash seems to give another account of the same story, but this time Gabriel takes the rôle of the herculean fisherman. Rather than

take this merely as repetition, perhaps it would be better to see the first paragraph as a summary of the next. The first paragraph ends with the quotation from Job which is in the form of a question: 'Can you draw out Leviathan...?'. The answer is that only God has the strength and skill to defeat this primordial power, and the Midrash intends to demonstrate this belief. Gabriel is sent by God to bring Leviathan from the sea but his attempt fails and he is swallowed by the monster. God has to come to the rescue, and it is he who slays Leviathan with his own hand (AB 11.4). His victory is greeted by the righteous with shouts of joy. One more of God's enemy's has been defeated. God's supremacy has been proved once more, and again this is achieved at the expense of an angel.

Gabriel's inability to slay Leviathan is recorded in the Talmud:

When R.Dimi came, he said in the name of R.Jonathan: 'Gabriel is to arrange in the future a chase of Leviathan; for it is said, Can you draw out Leviathan with a fish hook? Or press down his tongue with a cord? (Job 40:25). And if the Holy One, blessed be He, will not help him, he will be unable to prevail over him; for it is said, Let him who made him bring near his sword. (Job 40:19)' b.B.B.74b-75a.

Once Leviathan has been dealt with, God turns his attention to the two Behemoths. As two of these have to be caught, the two angels, Gabriel and Michael, are commissioned to bring them in from the 'thousand hills' (Ps.50:10) (8). According to tradition, as in the case of Leviathan, the female Behemoth is to provide food for the righteous at the banquet in the World to Come:

...And also Behemoth on a thousand hills were created male and female, and had they mated with



one another they would have destroyed the whole world. What did the Holy One, blessed be He, do? He castrated the male and cooled (var.sterilised) the female and preserved it for the righteous for the World to Come... b.B.B.74b.

We are told that when Gabriel and Michael attempt to catch the Behemoths, they try to escape. The monsters summon up all their strength and turn on the angels: the male pursues Gabriel and the female Michael. They bring the angels to the ground. At this point two pages of the ms are missing and we are left without a conclusion to the story of the capture of the Behemoths. But if we take this story to be parallel to the account of Leviathan, then we can assume that the two angels had to be rescued from the ferocity of the monsters in the same way that Gabriel had had to be rescued from the jaws of Leviathan. As only God could slay Leviathan, so only God would be able to slay the Behemoths. Although we can predict the outcome, we have lost many details of the story as the result of the missing pages of ms.

The narrative resumes after the missing section with the subject of the messianic age (AB 11.b). Ps.110 sets the scene: the Messiah enthroned at the right hand of God with his enemies crushed. The rest of this chapter explains the events that will take place during the messianic age. The Messiah will come to Jerusalem where for a period of forty years all Jews from the diaspora will gather around him, and this will be a time of peace and contentment. Then there will be a time of war fought between the Messiah and the righteous on one side and Gog and Magog on the other. For the third stage God descends from the heavens and takes over from the Messiah

and the righteous and finally defeats the enemy. These eschatological elements form part of God's salvation plan for the righteous, and they appear throughout Jewish literature when the subject of eschatological salvation arises, although not always with the same details or in the same order (9).

In our Midrash the ingathering of the exiles and the reign of the Messiah, with its time of universal peace, pre-empt the war of Gog and Magog. The ingathering of the exiles is a biblical hope expressed in its clearest form in Is.27:12-13:

In that day from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt the Lord will thresh out the grain, and you will be gathered one by one, O people of Israel. And in that day a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the Lord on the holy mountain at Jerusalem (10).

Not only Israel, but all the kings of the nations of the world are to come to Jerusalem and pay homage to God's Messiah (AB 11b.3). The statement that the foreign kings bring the Messiah gifts is paralleled in Midrash Rabbah:

One of the common people said to R.Hoshaya: 'If I tell you a good thing, will you repeat it in public in my name?' 'What is it?' he asked. 'All the gifts which the Patriarch Jacob made to Esau', he replied, 'the heathens will return them to the Messiah in the Messianic era.' 'What is the proof?' 'The Kings of Tarshish and the isles shall return tribute (Ps.72:10): it does not say "shall bring", but "shall return".' 'By thy life!' he exclaimed, 'thou hast said a good thing, and I will teach it in thy name.' Gen.R.78.12.

This idea finds its biblical basis in the messianic Psalm 72:

May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute, may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! Ps.72:10.

Our Midrash uses Is.49:23 and Mic.7:17 to describe the position of servility the foreign sovereigns will be put in as regards Israel. The return of the exiles becomes a picture of revenge on the foreign nations for their past repression and occupation of Israel. The messianic reign lasts for forty years. During that time Israel will be free from oppression, allowed to dwell in peace and security. This situation stands in stark contrast to the next event: the advent of Gog and Magog.

The biblical basis for Jewish traditions concerning Gog and Magog is Ez.38-39. Although Magog is mentioned elsewhere in scripture as the second son of Japheth (11), Gog appears for the first time in Ez.38 no doubt having been derived, either by tradition or the biblical author, from the name 'Magog' (12). In Ezekiel Magog is the name of a country in the north, but in later tradition Gog and Magog are both understood to be leaders of foreign nations. Our Midrash seems to reflect both these views. The opening phrase of this section reflects Ezekiel: 'In what manner will Gog of the land of Magog come?' But later on the two names appear to refer to two individuals, for example:

Then the Holy One, blessed be He, seizes handfuls of fire from the river Dinur and throws it upon them, upon Gog and Magog...

The battle between Gog and Magog became a feature not only of Jewish but also of Christian eschatology. The earliest written

account of it in Christian texts is found in the Book of Revelation:

And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be loosed from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations which are at the four corners of the earth, that is Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched up over the broad earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city; but fire came down from heaven and consumed them. Rev.20:7-9.

Although many differences are apparent between the scheme presented by our Midrash and that in Revelation, for example the role of Satan, there are similarities, notably in the fact that the battle occurs after the messianic reign (13), and Gog and Magog are defeated by the hand of God.

Our Midrash begins with an interpretation of Ez.38:10-16. According to Ezekiel God prompts Gog and Magog to covet the possessions of Israel. This point is emphasised by the Midrash to draw attention to the fact that God is in full control (AB 11b.6). They spend seven years gathering together great peoples armed and ready for battle. The troops cover the land like a cloud. Our Midrash interprets this to mean that they are so numerous that, when they march for one hour, they cover five hundred miles of land. Once the armies reach Israel the rest of the nations arrive to share in their plundering of the land. The plundering is allowed to last for thirty days: for ten days they plunder the countryside; for ten days they plunder the towns and cities; and for the last ten days their plundering reaches its climax at the gates of Jerusalem (14). Half of Jerusalem's population is carried away into exile (AB 11b.8). This is to fulfil the prophecy of Zechariah 14, which now

becomes the biblical basis for the next section as it moves into the narrative of the Messiah and God's entry into the scene of battle:

For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women ravished; half of the city shall go into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations as when he fights on the day of battle. Zech.14:2-3.

In our Midrash, by introducing the passage from Is.11:4 (AB 11b.9), the military engagement begins with the Messiah, accompanied by the righteous, killing thousands from the occupying forces as he goes forth from Jerusalem. This is followed by the arrival of God accompanied by the ministering angels to finish the destruction of the foreign nations, in particular the destruction of Gog and Magog.

Based on Ez.32:22, AB 11b.11-12 categorises six methods of war employed by God against Gog and Magog: pestilence, bloodshed, flood rain, hailstones, fire, and sulphur. Each of these divine 'weapons' is interpreted in relation to other biblical texts in order to provide a more detailed description for this eschatological drama.

One of the most interesting features of this section is the reference to 'their prince' (AB 11b.12) who is to be thrown down from the heavens. This does not seem to refer to either Gog or Magog since they belong to the earthly realm, and in the Midrash at this point we find Is.24:21:

On that day the Lord will punish the host of  
heaven in heaven, and the kings of the earth on  
the earth.

This passage draws a distinction between heavenly and earthly retribution which would seem to signify that the 'prince' is a creature of heaven. Although in previous chapters our Midrash has accounted for the destruction of Satan (15), perhaps here it refers to a tradition similar to that found in the passage quoted above from the Book of Revelation. There Satan is cast into a lake of fire and sulphur at the same time that Gog and Magog are destroyed by fire rained on them from heaven (16). More likely the 'prince' could be identified with the 'prince of the kingdom of Persia' mentioned in Dan.10:13 as a rival of Michael. Also in Ez.28:13ff there is a reference to the 'king of Tyre' who is described as being in the Garden of Eden alongside a guardian cherub, and who was cast down from the mountain of God (17).

The weapons used by God in his war against the armies of Gog and Magog echo the plagues of Egypt, particularly the 'stones of ice' that rained down from the heavens. Here the narrative of the Midrash digresses to speculate on the nature of the stones of ice referred to in Exodus (AB 11b.12). It estimates the gigantic size of both the stones of snow and the stones of ice by gematria. The word  $\lambda\lambda\psi$  adds up to three hundred and thirty-three, and the word  $\tau\tau\beta$  to two hundred and six. These numbers signify the size of the heavenly missiles in miles. We are told that when Moses prayed that these stones would stop falling on Egypt, the angels Gabriel and Bardiel caught the stones in mid-air so that they did not land on

the earth (18). The angels continued to hold them until the Israelites reach the promised land when they were released upon the Canaanites.

Gog and Magog are destroyed by the hand of God. He takes fire from the river Dinur and throws it at them (AB 11b.14). This is a fictitious river whose name originates from the Aramaic phrase found in Dan.7:10: נְהַר דִּי נִיר, 'river of fire' (19). The fire enters their nostrils so that their breath is burnt out of them, but their bodies are left intact so that they can serve as the food for an eschatological banquet. For this banquet, outlined in Ez.39:17-20, the guests are the creatures of the field and the birds of the air:

Speak to the birds of every sort and to all the beasts of the fields, 'Assemble and come, gather from all sides to the sacrificial feast which I am preparing for you, a great sacrificial feast upon the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat flesh and drink blood. You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth - of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan. And you shall eat fat till you are filled, and drink blood till you are drunk, at the sacrificial feast which I am preparing for you. And you shall be filled at my table with horses and riders, with mighty men and all kinds of warriors.'

According to a midrash on Ps.150, the feast will last for twelve months:

Ezekiel did not plainly declare how long the beasts and the birds would feed upon the flesh of Gog. But when Isaiah came, he plainly declared how long it would be saying: They shall be left together for the ravenous birds of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth. And the ravenous birds shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them. (Is.18:6). Behold,

then! They will feed upon Gog for twelve months, for winter and summer together make twelve months. (20)

This banquet forms a counterpart to the banquet described in chapter 11 where the corpses of the cosmic monsters, Leviathan and Behemoth, were served up for the righteous in the World to Come. Here, in the earthly realm, the corpses of Gog and Magog are served up at the end time for the animals and birds to feast upon.

Just as the fire mentioned in Ez.38:22 is identified with the river Dinur, so the sulphur mentioned there is identified with the sulphur that God used to punish Sodom. Both the fire and the sulphur singe the hair on all the corpses that have fought on the side of Gog and Magog in the messianic battles. This section argues strongly the case for God's eschatological intervention with examples from Israel's past. If God has shown himself in the past to be a God of battle, as in the case of the Pharaoh, Sisera and Sennacherib, how much more will he show his strength when all the nations of the world are to be judged? In the margin of the manuscript there is a further interpretation of Ez.38:23 and the phrase 'Gog and Magog', using gematria to explain that the battle with Gog and Magog will last nine days, and that the nations of the world, who will experience God's greatness and holiness, are seventy in number, the traditional number used by the rabbis for the peoples of the world apart from Israel.

In these chapters, 11 and 11b, many Jewish traditions concerning the eschaton have been collected together by the author to produce



a dramatic climax to God's judgment of the world. In previous chapters Satan and his retinue, the creatures who had their origin in the heavens, were the objects of God's judgment and punishment. Here he takes on all the evil forces of the earth, beginning with the primordial monsters and ending with the human enemies of himself and Israel: Gog and Magog accompanied by the nations of the world. Just as the archangels had assisted God in the defeat of Satan on the heavenly plane, so on the earthly plane the Messiah of Israel assists him in the defeat of Gog and Magog. Furthermore, just as ultimately Satan had to be destroyed by the hand of God alone, so in the end Gog and Magog are destroyed by the handfuls of fire thrown at them by God alone.

## Notes

1. This is discussed in the context of the overall structure of the Midrash in the introduction, see above p.21.
2. For a discussion of Leviathan and Behemoth in biblical and rabbinic text see, 'Leviathan and Behemoth', Broydé and Kohler, JE, vol.8.
3. See commentary on AB 2.
4. For example, as we saw in the previous chapter, biblical references to heaven and earth can be interpreted in terms of this world and the World to Come respectively. See AB 10.11 and commentary.
5. The same interpretation of Job 40:30 can be found in PdRK s2.4, where also we find a parallel to the eschatological banquet involving the eating of Leviathan: 'Thereafter [banging] a cymbal [to attract customers, the righteous will hawk] the Leviathan's head as a fish delicacy. (Job 40:31). On this verse, R.Naham, R.Huna the Priest, and R.Judah the Levite bar R.Shallum made different comments. One said: [Like fishmongers] the righteous will bang a cymbal and cry, 'Let everyone who has obeyed the command of going up to Jerusalem in pilgrimage come and partake of the Leviathan's head, whose delicious taste is like the taste of the head of a fish from the Sea of Tiberias...' cf Lev.R.13.3.
6. The 'Great Sea' refers to the Mediterranean, as opposed to the smaller Sea of Tiberias, or the Dead Sea.
7. English version 41:1.
8. Other e.g.'s of biblical passages which refer to Behemoth are Ps.73:22; Job 40:15.
9. For references to the many parallels and close parallels to the eschatological plan outlined in our Midrash see E.Schürer, op.cit., vol.2, pp.488ff.
10. See also Deut.30:3; Is.11:12; Mic.4:6,7:11; Ez.39:27; Zech.11:10-12; Is.35:8.
11. Gen.10:2; 1 Chron.1:5.
12. For a discussion of Gog and Magog, see, e.g., Hirsch and Montgomery, 'Gog and Magog', JE, vol.6, pp.19-20; and Kohler, 'Eschatology', JE, vol.5, pp.209-218b.

13. See Rev.20:2-4.
14. The division of Gog and Magog's attack into three parts is reminiscent of the tradition found in Midr.Pss.118.12 where Gog and Magog's threefold attack is modelled on the former invasions on Israel led by Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar.
15. See AB 8 and 9.
16. As in the case of Midrash Aleph Beth in this section, Rev.20:8-10 is using Ez.32:22 as a basis for its eschatological description.
17. The full myth behind this speculation can be found in 1 Enoch 6-12; see also M. Barker, The Older Testament, chap.1.
18. The name Bardiel is derived from the word כַּיִל 'ice' or 'hail'.
19. According to Dan.7:10 this river of fire issued forth from beneath the throne of God. This heavenly location would seem to be the basis for the tradition which states that each day God creates new companies of angels from this river, and at the end of each day he casts the angels of that day back into it. See Gen.R.78.1; b.Hag.13b.
20. Midr.Pss.150.1.

12.1 After this the citizens of Jerusalem go forth under the control of the Messiah: section by section, company by company, group by group. And they plunder those who plundered them, and despoil those who despoiled them. And in three months they gather all their possessions and all their weapons of war including shields and bucklers, bows and arrows, breastplates and helmets, handpikes and spears and staffs. And they bring them into Jerusalem, and fill Jerusalem to the brink with the property of Gog and Magog.

2. And for seven years they do not take wood from the field or from the vineyards, and do not cut down wood from the forests or from the swamps, or from any trees. For all the inhabitants of the land of Israel will kindle their fires with weapons, as it is said, They will not take wood from the field or cut down from the forests, for they will kindle fire with weapons (and they will plunder those who plundered them, and despoil those who despoiled them, says the Lord). (Ez.39:10).

3. And for seven months every winged creature and every bird of the heavens and every beast of the field will eat their flesh and drink their blood and lick up their fat until they are filled. And they make their bodies fat until they are not able to flee or to run because of the great weight of their fat, as it is said, And you will eat fat until you are sated etc. (Ez.39:19). And you will be sated at my table with horses

The ms breaks off here; [Wertheimer continues:

and riders, mighty men and warriors. (Ez.39:20). Then every winged creature and every bird of the heavens and every beast of the field opens its mouth in praise of their creator, and says, And the faithfulness of the Lord is forever, praise the Lord. (Ps.117:2). And all the orders of creation reply after them, 'Praise the Lord'.

At the end of seven months all Israel stands firm, and they bury them in the valley of the Aravim, east of the sea, in the land of Israel. And they purify all the land from the bones of Gog and Magog, as it is said, There Gog and all his multitude will be buried; it will be called the valley of Hamon-Gog. (Ez.39:11).

It teaches that he says to the Messiah in the Garden of Eden: 'Come, sit upon his throne,' because he is in heaven, as it is said, His seed will be forever, and his throne like the sun before me. (Ps.89:36). And the Messiah will treat with respect Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and David, and all the kings and all the prophets, and he will not sit upon the throne on account of their honour. Then Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the kings and all the righteous go and stand before him and say to him: 'Our true Messiah, your Lord delights in you, your creator desires. He has chosen you...']

As in the case of the previous chapter, there is a problem here concerning the continuity of the text due to the condition of the ms. The ms we are using comprises a collection of various midrashim, and our comparatively lengthy midrash appears in two parts in the ms. Its break occurs in this chapter (1). As a result a large part of it is missing, including its ending. However, Wertheimer prints another page, a continuation of chapter 12, which no longer exists in the ms. His extra section also includes a second interpretation based on the letters ב"ש א"ן. This interpretation, if original, would seem to be better situated in AB 11b where the same words ב"ש א"ן occur and the same characters: God addressing the Messiah (2).

This chapter is unique in the Midrash in that it begins without any pair of letters forming the opening phrase. Accordingly, we can regard this omission as an error either in an earlier ms, or on the part of the copyist. Continuing our way through the third alphabet combination, this chapter should have begun with the letters ג"ד, following on from ב"ש (3).

The contents of chapter 12 continue the narrative from the previous chapter. Gog and Magog have been defeated, and the triumphant Israelites of Jerusalem, under the command of the Messiah, plunder the possessions of the defeated foe. Just as those who had made up the ranks of Gog and Magog had been described in chapter 11 as: 'beyond measure and beyond number', so their

possessions include every conceivable weapon of war. The number is so great that the Israelites have no need to chop firewood for seven years since they use the weapons for their kindling. As in the case of the previous chapter, Ez.38-39 forms the basic text, particularly chap.39. While the enemies' weapons provide firewood for the citizens of Jerusalem for seven years, their corpses feed all the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field for seven months.

The material contained in Wertheimer's edition finishes this section with all the creatures of the earth offering up praise to God, and the burial of the enemies' bones. As we noted above, Wertheimer includes part of an interpretation based on the letters. These letters form the words **בשׁוׁב יתי**, 'Come, sit'. The idea that this section belongs in the previous chapter is reinforced by the fact that they both begin with an allusion to Ps.110:1:

The Lord says to my lord: 'Sit at my right hand,  
till I make your enemies your footstool.

This passage ends with a summons to the Messiah to share in the divine victory (4).

The Messiah is now in heaven, but he is reluctant to sit upon the throne of glory beside God on account of the presence of the souls of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and David, and all the kings and prophets. The tradition that the souls of Israel's patriarchs and righteous individuals reside beneath the throne of glory appears earlier in the Midrash, at the point where the world has just been created (5). Wertheimer's edition of the ms is interrupted at the

point where the righteous try to persuade the Messiah to sit on the throne. The language that is used echoes the words of Is.42:1

Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in  
whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon  
him, he will bring forth justice to the nations.

Like the Targum to Isaiah, and sequels to that tradition, our text understands these words to refer to the Messiah of Israel.



## Notes

1. See the discussion of the mss in the introduction, pp.1-2.
2. See AB 11b.1 and commentary.
3. See the Table of Alphabets.
4. The Garden of Eden is the place to which the souls of the righteous go after death; according to b.Ta'an 31a God will dance with the righteous in the Garden of Eden.
5. See AB 2.10.

[The beginning of this chapter is missing]

13.1 [He takes] his spirit and his breath and his power and his holy spirit from each and every angel, and from each and every seraph, so that they all may be exterminated as one. Then [nothing will remain], not from the generations of the heavens, and not from the generations of the earth, and not from the ministering angels, and not from the created beings whom the Holy One, blessed be He, created in the world, except for [him] alone, as it is said, And the Lord alone will be exalted. (Is.2:17).

2. In what sense 'alone'? Alone without his throne, without his glory, without ministering ones, without servants, without a palace, without anything except the righteous ones who raise the Holy One, blessed be He, upon his wings, as it is said, He will cover you with his wings etc. (Ps.91:4). And he says, 'Therefore you shall not be afraid.'

3. When he renews the World to Come, he will renew his throne and his glory and his canopy and his seat of honour. And he will place the righteous in the world like the ministering angels, and he will put on them six wings like the ministering angels. And some of them will stand before the throne of glory like the ministering angels. And some of them will stand in the world to do his will in the world. They go from one end of the world to the other, like clouds and like eagles, and they are not weary. They run like sparks and flashes of lightning to serve their creator's glory, and they are not tired, as

it is said, And those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they will go up. (Is.40:31).

The chapter ends.

This fragment of a chapter occurs immediately after the break of the text of Midrash Aleph Beth in the ms. Although this break loses us the ending of the previous chapter and the beginning of this one, this would seem to be the full extent of the damage. We are able to ascertain this by reference to the alphabetical framework of the Midrash. The next complete chapter, chapter 14, begins with two pairs of letters א"ב and ב"א, thus we can deduce that the present chapter would have begun with the letters א"ב (1).

The subject matter of this chapter concerns the World to Come, and in particular the rôle of the righteous. All God's enemies have been defeated, and the old world has been destroyed. The righteous can now begin to receive their reward. It is stressed that this is a new beginning: every angel in the heavens and every creature on the earth has been destroyed (AB 13.1-2). All that remains is God and his righteous remnant. This idea echoes the appendix to chapter 5 where we were told that God, having torn up the heavens and the earth, is left on his own:

Nothing was left of them except the throne of glory alone and the Holy One, blessed be He, dwelling upon it in his glory, on his own, as it is said, The Lord alone will be lifted up on that day. (Is.2:11) AB 2.6.

Both passages use Is.2 as a prooftext for God's sole existence. This chapter extends the idea further by removing even the throne of glory:

Alone without his throne, without his glory, without

ministering ones, without servants, without a palace, without anything except the righteous ones.

Instead of God existing alone with his throne of glory, now he exists alone with the righteous.

Chapter 5 was concerned with heterodox traditions questioning the supremacy of God's power as creator. As a result it emphasised that when it came to the time for the World to Come to be created, God was without any company that might at a subsequent time rebel against him to claim a share in his glory (2). In contrast, here the emphasis is on the righteous and their central rôle in the World to Come. God has learnt a lesson from his first creation. There he gave pride of place to the heavenly creatures some of whom responded by rebelling against him. They, Satan and his retinue, spent their time stirring up trouble between Israel and God prompting God to punish his people time and time again. They further exploited their position, next only to God in power, by claiming to be co-creators of the present world. In the World to Come, the problems incurred with the first creation are avoided, first, by God creating all of it without the presence of any angelic being. Secondly, instead of giving the angels the chance to share in his heavenly glory, this time the righteous take over the rôle of servants ministering from God's side in the new heavens and the new earth.

Not only are the righteous to take over the positions of the ministering angels, but they are to be made like them physically (AB

13.3). God is going to place on each of them six wings, like the angels attending the throne in Is.6:2:

Above him stood the seraphim; each had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

The idea that the righteous are to be like angels has its origin in a passage from the book of Daniel (3). In the final chapter an angel reveals to Daniel the secrets of the resurrection of the dead. He is told that the righteous are to be raised to everlasting life:

And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. Dan.12:3.

Here the righteous are to have the appearance of heavenly bodies, an idea which is taken up and developed in a lengthy passage in 2 Baruch:

When they, therefore, will see that those over whom they are exalted now will then be more exalted and glorified than they, then both these and those will be changed, these into the splendour of angels and those into startling visions and horrible shapes...Miracles, however, will appear at their own time to those who are saved because of their works and for whom the law is now a hope...For they shall see that world which is now invisible to them, and they will see a time which is now hidden to them. And time will no longer make them older. For they will live in the heights of that world and they will be like the angels and be equal to the stars. And they will be changed into any shape which they wished, from beauty to loveliness, and from light to the splendour of glory...And the excellence of the righteous will be greater than that of the angels. 2 Bar.51:5-13.

In early Christian texts we find similar developments. For

example, in St Mark's Gospel there is an account of a discussion between Jesus, the Pharisees and the Sadducees on the question of resurrection from the dead. Jesus is asked to comment on a hypothetical situation: a woman who has had seven husbands dies, whose wife will she be at the resurrection? Jesus replies:

...when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. Mk 12:25 (4).

In our Midrash the righteous take over completely from the angels. Even though some things are renewed in the World to Come, for example, God's throne and glory, the angels are not (5). Now they stand in attendance around God's throne, and they perform tasks in the world according to God's will. This idea forms the climax to the Midrash's antagonistic attitude towards the angelic retinue which we have encountered throughout the text. The angels have consistently attempted to undermine the relationship between God and Israel: first, by trying to dissuade God from creating humanity at all, and secondly, by Satan's constant accusations against Israel. In the World to Come all has been put right. The angels have been disposed of, and the righteous, who represent the perfection of God's creation of humanity, take their place as the servants of God constantly to share in the joy of his presence.

## Notes

1. See the Table of Alphabets.
2. See above Chaps 8 & 9 which recount Satan's challenge to God's supremacy as creator of the present world. Cf. 4 Ez.7:29ff. where at the end of time God annihilates everything until it is returned to primordial chaos before he begins his judgment. Here the destruction of the present world follows its judgment and immediately precedes the creation of the World to Come; see also AB 5.5-10
3. See also Wisd.3:7-9 where on the Day of the Lord the righteous join the host of heaven; cf 1 Enoch 104:2.
4. There are parallel accounts of this story in Matt.22:23-3 and Lk.20:27-38. See also 1 Cor.15:35-55 where St Paul discusses the nature of resurrection and resurrected bodies.
5. In PdRE 60 there is a discussion about the new heavens and the new earth. There the host of heaven is said to pass away (cf Is.34:4), but they will be renewed.



14.1. Sadhe He, Pe Vav - Because he goes up and punishes, punishes and ascends into the heights, the high places of the world. He punishes the heavens, and the new heavens are created; he punishes the earth, and a new earth is created.

2. And he hewed seven pillars of righteousness, and suspended all the world on top of them corresponding to the seven righteous ones who are in this world, because upon them was the world established. And they are: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; Moses and Aaron; David and Solomon.

3. And in the same way that the world was established for their sakes, so it was established for the sake of their wives, as it is said, Arise, plead your cause to the mountains etc. (Mic.6:1). The 'mountains' are none other than the fathers of the world, as it is said, Mountains, hear the cause of the Lord etc. (Mic.6:2). The 'hills' are none other than the mothers: Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah, as it is said, Let the hills hear your voice. (Mic.6:1).

4. By the merit of Abraham, the Holy One, blessed be He, created the heavens and the earth, as it is said, These are the generations of the heavens etc. (Gen.2:4). Do not read 'when they had been created', but 'by Abraham', for these letters and the letters of 'Abraham' are one and the same.

5. Then the heavens and the earth will be agitated and afraid and

shaken. The Holy One, blessed be He, says to them: 'Why are you agitated and afraid and shaken?' They say before him: 'Lord of the universe, we know ourselves that already the wicked in the world will provoke you, and you will destroy the world on their account. What will happen to us? For you did not create us except for the sake of the sons of Adam.' The Holy One, blessed be He, replies and says to them: 'I did not create you except for the sake of Abraham and Sarah.' As it is said, Blessed be Abram by God most high. (Gen.14:19). Then the heavens and the earth and all the orders of creation will be glad and will rejoice and say, Blessed be Abram by God most high etc. (Gen.14:19).

6. By the merit of Isaac the Holy One, blessed be He, delivers the sons of Adam from unnatural death, as it is said, And Isaac came from the well etc. (Gen.24:62). 'Well' is nothing other than 'life', as it is said, The well of the waters of life etc. (Gen.26:19).

7. By the merit of Jacob he delivered Abraham from the fire, as it is said, Thus says the Lord to the house of Jacob who etc. (Is.29:22).

8. By the merit of Moses the Holy One, blessed be He, gave possession of the Torah and commandments to Israel, as it is said, And Moses went up to God etc. (and the Lord called to him from the mountain saying, 'Thus you will say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel). (Ex.19:3).

9. By the merit of Aaron the Holy One, blessed be He, gave

possession of the three-fold blessings to Israel, as it is said, And Aaron lifted up his hands towards the people etc. (Ex.9:22).

10. By the merit of David the Holy One, blessed be He, gave possession of the Psalms of his glory to Israel, as it is said, The sweet psalmist of Israel. (2 Sam.23:1).

11. By the merit of Solomon the Holy One, blessed be He, gave possession of wisdom and understanding to Israel, as it is said, Acquire wisdom, acquire understanding. (Prov.4:5).

12. As by their merit the Holy One, blessed be He, gave possession of this world to Israel, so the Holy One, blessed be He, on their account, gives possession of the World to Come to the righteous for the time to come.

13. By the merit of Abraham the Holy One, blessed be He, creates the new heavens and the new earth, as it is said, For as the new heavens etc. (Is.66:22).

14. By the merit of Isaac the Holy One, blessed be He, brings to life the dead and raises the congregation of Korah from the midst of Sheol, as it is said, The Lord kills and brings to life. (1 Sam.2:6). - these are the dead. 'He brings down to Sheol' and 'he lifts up' - this is Korah and his congregation. And it says, To hear the groaning of the captive etc. (Ps.102:21). Because he hears the sound of the prayers of Korah and his congregation for they are captives in Sheol, in the great abyss. And he lifts them up from

Sheol, as it is said, He brings down to Sheol etc. (1 Sam.2:6). To set free the sons of death. (Ps.102:21). - These are Israel who are regarded as the sons of death, for they are the sons of Isaac who was regarded as though he had died and his ashes cast upon the altar.

15. By the merit of Jacob the Holy One, blessed be He, gives possession of his throne of glory to the righteous for the World to Come because engraved upon it was the image of Jacob's face, as it is said, And the throne of glory he will make them inherit. (1 Sam.2:8).

16. By the merit of Moses the Holy One, blessed be He, gives the World to Come as an inheritance to the righteous, all of which is a Sabbath for the time to come, as it is said, The sweet smell of your precious oils. (Sg of Sgs 1:3).

17. By the merit of Aaron the Holy One, blessed be He, removes anger from the world, as it is said, And he stood between the dead etc. (Num.17:13).

18. By the merit of David the Holy One, blessed be He, gives sovereignty and honour as an inheritance to the righteous in the World to Come, as it is said, And he was in Jeshurun. (Deut.33:5). 'He was' is not said, but 'he will be', because he will be.

19. By the merit of Solomon the Holy One, blessed be He, will make peace between fire and water, between snow and rain, between

creature and creature, beast and beast, as it is said, He makes peace...is there any number...? (Job 25:2-3).

20. How is the World to Come organised, both the things above and those below? The order of things above is three hundred orders; the order of the things below is three (hundred) orders. The order of the things above is like the splendour of the Shekinah, the order of the things below is like the splendour of the sun. And each order of thirty has thirty thousand dwellings, and they are like lightning flashes. And in each one stand two columns of fire for each spirit. And each column is seventy thousand miles and their splendour goes from one end of the world to the other, like the splendour of the sun and the Shekinah and the throne of glory.

21. And the servants of fire stand in the midst of each one, and the righteous of the world fly with their wings and go up there, and they pray before the Holy One, blessed be He, every day, as it is said, They will pray to you; God is with you only. (Is.45:14).

22. And what is the prayer they pray before him? 'Let there be good will before you, O Lord, my God. For you will have pity on your world. For you chose and renewed those who knew your name and on account of your great goodness which you stored up for those who feared you. For they were innocently hoping for your salvation. And they reflected upon your goodness to rejoice with you on the day of your rejoicing, and to enjoy themselves on your account on the day of your enjoyment. You take pleasure in those who fear you, being glad with them in your rejoicing, and rejoicing over them in the

strength of your joy. Your mighty hand will be strong and your exalted right hand lifted up. You will repay love to those who know your love. Blessed are you, O Lord, who takes pleasure in those who wait.'

23. Immediately the Holy One, blessed be He, answers the prayer from the midst of the canopy of his glory, and says to them: 'My sons, do not upset yourselves, for before you finished praying to me I accepted your prayer. And until now there was pain and shame for me and for you in the world. From now on there is nothing for me or for you except rejoicing and gladness, shouting and song, joy and pleasure.' As it is said, And the meek will possess the land etc. (Ps.37:11). And it says, And let the righteous be joyful etc. (Ps.68:4).

24. But how do we know that when the righteous were in distress in this world the Holy One, blessed be He, shared their distress? As it is said, I am with him in distress etc. (Ps.91:15). What does 'I am with him in distress' mean? It teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, said: 'I dwell with him in this world, I will rescue him in this world, and I will honour him in the days of the Messiah. I will sate him with length of days inside the Garden of Eden, and I will show him my salvation in the World to Come.'

25. But how is it that when there is rejoicing for the righteous in the time to come, the Holy One, blessed be He, is glad and rejoices with them? As it is said, (Let the glory of the Lord be for ever,) let the Lord rejoice in his works. (Ps.104:31). There are no 'works' of

the Holy One. blessed be He, except the righteous alone. For all come to nought and cease to exist, and they go from the world and do not return, except the righteous alone [and they are] sons of the World to Come because they inherit the life of the World to Come, as it is said, Tell the righteous that... (Is.3:10). It teaches that the Holy One. blessed be He, said to them to the prophets, 'Go, announce and tell each righteous one that it is good for me and it is good for my creatures. They will benefit from the interest gained by their deeds in this world, and I will restore the capital sum to them them in the World to Come.' As it is said, And delight in the Lord (and he will give you the desires of your heart, reveal your ways to the Lord and confide in him, and he will act. He will bring forth your right like light, and your judgment like the noon day). (Ps.37:4-6).

26. And where is it said that the heavens and the earth go from the world, and do not return again? As it is said, Lift up your eyes to the heavens etc. (Is.51:6).

27. And where is it said that the sea and the dryland go from the world and do not return? As it is said, And its inhabitants like etc. (Is 51:6).

28. And where is it said that the mountains and the hills also go from the world and do not return? As it is said, The mountains will depart etc. (Is.54:10).

29. And where is it said that the sun and the moon, the stars and

the constellations also go and do not return? As it is said, And all of their host will wither away etc. (Is.34:4).

30. And where is it said that the ministering angels and creatures, and all the souls go and do not return? As it is said, And all their host. (ibid) 'and all their host' - it teaches that all the host of the heavens and all the host of the earth go from the world, and only the righteous alone return to the World to Come, as it is said, My salvation shall be for the time to come. (Is.51:6).

31. And where is it said that the righteous are the sons of the World to Come when they return to the World to Come? Furthermore, that they do not die, and that they do not leave the World to Come for ever and ever and ever? As it is said, For as the new heavens etc. (and the new earth which I make stand before me, says the Lord, so will your descendants and your name stand.) (Is.66:22). Just as the heavens and earth of the World to Come live and exist for ever and ever and ever, so the righteous, sons of the World to Come, live and exist for ever and ever and ever.

32. How? It teaches that each righteous one will live for a thousand years. Their eyes were not dimmed so that they could not see, as in the days of their youth. And the vigour of their mature years has not left their flesh and bones. And after a thousand years there will be raised for them new teeth and nipples like children, one sort for men and one for women. And for each one of them will be recreated the signs of puberty, and all of them will return to the days of their youth, as it is said, And those who wait for the Lord



will renew strength... (Is.40:31). And it says, They will still produce fruit in old age. (Ps.92:14). 'They were' is not said here, but 'they will be', because they are going to return to the days of their youth. And if you wonder at this idea, come and observe Abraham and Sarah: After I have grown old I have etc. (Gen.18:12). And she said, 'Who would have said?' (Gen.21:7). That is how the righteous are in the World to Come, because they see the face of the Shekinah and are sated by the splendour of the Might.

33. Why all these things? Because they come from the Holy One. blessed be He, himself. For this is what the Holy One. blessed be He, is like every day, as it is said, For the Lord is upright, he is my rock etc. (Ps.92:15/16). And a thousand years in the eyes of the Holy One. blessed be He, are one day, as it is said, For a thousand years in your eyes are as yesterday. (Ps.90:4).

The chapter ends.

This chapter forms a pivot between the third and fourth parts of the Midrash. It is the last chapter of the third alphabet combination which concerned the destruction of all God's enemies on the earth. The fourth combination concerns the World to Come. Here the Midrash begins with the subject of judgment, and then takes us into the realm of the World to Come. There is a second interpretation in the chapter which expands the theme of the relationship between the merit of Israel's righteous heroes and the creation of the World to Come.

Two pairs of letters are given at the beginning of the chapter: ה"צ and פ"ו. The second pair prompts the use of the verb פוקד 'he punishes'. The use of the first pair is not so clear. The letter צ occurs in another verb which describes the action of God בצד 'he hewed'. Since three of the four letters occur in verbs describing God's actions, perhaps we should find the fourth, ה, in the first verb to do this in the chapter עולה 'he goes up'.

Frequently in this chapter we come across the phrase 'sons of ...' whether referring to 'Adam', 'death' or the 'World to Come'. The text serves as a good illustration of the meaning 'those who deserve'. The phrase 'sons of Adam' is used in the context of the wicked who by implication deserve the fate of Adam, that is death (AB 5.5). The phrase 'sons of death' is used in the context of Korah and his congregation who deserve to die because they rose up against Moses and Aaron (AB 14.14). The righteous are set in

contrast to both of these categories and instead are named 'sons of the World to Come'. Their fate reflects the merit they have earned during their lives, unlike the rest of humanity they deserve to live in the World to Come (1).

The chapter begins by summarising the events described in the previous chapters:

He punishes the heavens, and the new heavens are created; he punishes the earth, and a new earth is created. AB 14.1.

We are reminded that the present world was founded on seven pillars symbolising the seven righteous ones: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Moses and Aaron; David and Solomon (2). Clearly the Midrash is alluding to Prov.9:1:

Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn her seven pillars.

The verb has been changed into the masculine form since the subject is no longer Lady Wisdom, but God himself; and her house has become the whole world. Lev.R.11.1-4 comprises a collection of interpretations of this passage from Proverbs. The first of these reflects the tradition found in our Midrash:

R. Jeremiah b. Ilai expounded the passage as referring to the creation of the world. Wisdom has built her house refers to the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is said, The Lord by wisdom founded the earth (Prov.3:19). She has hewn her seven pillars refers to the seven days at the Beginning, as it is said, For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. (Ex.20:11). Lev.R.11.1.

The central rôle played by the patriarchs in the establishment of

the present world they share with the matriarchs: Sarah, Rebek<sup>k</sup><sub>ah</sub>, Rachel and Leah (AB 14.3). This idea is ingeniously derived from Micah 6:1 & 2. The mountains and hills mentioned in this pas<sup>s</sup><sub>age</sub> are both said to listen to the voice of God which is a prerequisite for the righteous. The mountains, a masculine noun in Hebrew, are identified with the 'fathers'; and the hills, a feminine noun, are identified with the 'mothers'. Thus together they make up the righteous on whose merit the world was founded.

This opening passage, AB 14.1-4, ends with a reference to the tradition that the world is founded on Abraham alone which is derived from Gen.2:4 (3):

אלה תולדות השמים והארץ בהבראם

The word ב<sup>ה</sup>ב<sup>ר</sup>אם usually translated 'when they were created', contains the same letters as ב<sup>א</sup>ב<sup>ר</sup>הם 'for Abraham' though in a different order (4).

Still expounding within the context of God's creation of the present world, the Midrash gives us an insight into the uncertainties expressed by creation itself over its insecure future (AB 14.5). The heavens and the earth believe that they have been created for the sake of all humanity, and in addition they are aware that humanity will rebel against God (5). Their rebellion will mean that God will have to destroy the world. God reassures them by explaining that he did not create the world for the sake of all humanity, but for Abraham and Sarah alone. Their merit is enough

to ensure that there will always be a heaven and an earth, whether in the old creation or the new.

Earlier in the Midrash we were told that the world was created for the sake of Israel alone which seems to contradict the tradition in this chapter (6). Israel is defined, however, as those who practise the Torah and fulfil the commandments. This definition includes only those who perfectly obey the will of God, and Abraham and Sarah epitomize this obedience. Furthermore, to say that the world was created for the sake of Abraham and Sarah is tantamount to saying that it was created for the sake of Israel since they are the parents of the people of Israel.

The Midrash refers to Gen.14:19 which, like Gen.2:4, contains a phrase which associates Abraham with the work of creation:

Blessed be Abram by God most high, maker  
(בְּרָכָה) of heaven and earth.

The verse can be interpreted so that the phrase 'maker of heaven and earth' refers to Abraham rather than God:

R. Isaac said: Abraham used to entertain wayfarers, and when they had eaten he would say to them, 'say a blessing.' 'What shall we say?' they asked. 'Blessed be the God of the universe of whose bounty we have eaten,' he replied. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: 'My name was not known among my creatures, and you have made it known among them: I will regard you as though you were associated with me in the creation of the world.' Thus it is written...(Gen.14:19) Gen.R.43.7.

The Midrash continues by giving examples from the Bible and

haggadah illustrating how, by their merit, each of the seven righteous has affected the action of God for the benefit of the rest of Israel. These illustrations serve as a sign of hope for the future. Despite all the sins of Israel committed throughout the generations from the time of Adam the first human being to the present day, the merit of the righteous ensures that there will be salvation: there is a World to Come and there will be human existence in that world. The first list of the merits of the righteous (AB 14.5-11), is expanded upon with the inclusion of a further interpretation concerning their great achievements (AB 14.13-19).

Abraham, according to AB 14.13 prompts the very creation of the new heavens and the new earth. Abraham's connection with the work of the creation of the present world has already been discussed in this chapter in relation to AB 14.4. His relationship with the creation of the World to Come seems to be related to the promises made to him by God when he unquestioningly obeyed God's call:

...for all the land which you see I will give to you  
and to your descendants for ever. I will make your  
descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if  
one can count the dust of the earth, your  
descendants also can be counted. Gen.13:15-16  
(7).

This promise bears a striking resemblance to that promise found in Is.66:22 :

For as the new heavens and the new earth which  
I will make shall remain before me, says the Lord;  
so shall your descendants and your name remain.

Just as Abraham's merit, earned through his unquestioning obedience to God, earned him a son in his old age and a land for his

descendants, so too it earned him and the righteous God's creation of the World to Come.

In order to illustrate how Isaac's merit prompts the resurrection of the dead, the Midrash begins by citing the evidence for this belief (AB 14.14). It is based on the story of the sons of Korah found in Num.16. They rebelled against the leadership of Moses and Aaron. As a result the earth split open swallowing Korah and his congregation and taking them down to Sheol. In rabbinic tradition the story of Korah is linked with Hannah whose prayers effect the release of Korah and his congregation from Sheol:

The rabbis said: Even so did the company of Korah sink and descend ever lower until Hannah arose and prayed for them: The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. (1 Sam.2:6) Gen.R.98.4.

Our Midrash utilises this tradition in order to illustrate that resurrection from the dead is a possibility. It continues by arguing that it is by the merit of Isaac that this possibility becomes a reality. Israel, as sons of death, are destined to die; but as sons of Isaac they are destined for the life of the World to Come. Isaac's sacrifice, the Akedah described in Gen.22, forms the basis for the traditional link between him and the hope of the resurrection of the dead. In the haggadah the story evolves to the extent that Isaac is no longer the passive victim of his father's slavish obedience to the word of God, but the active and willing human sacrifice. For example, Isaac is a grown man when Abraham takes him to the mountain, and asks to be bound tightly so that any involuntary struggling may not blemish the perfect sacrifice. In the haggadah

too Abraham speaks as if Isaac had died and that only his ashes remained on the altar (8). It is this tradition that is reflected in our Midrash when it uses the words: '...who was regarded as though he had died, and his ashes cast upon the altar'.

We are told in AB 14.15 that Jacob's merit earns the possession of the throne of glory for the righteous in the World to Come because his image is engraved upon it (9). This tradition is based on Gen.28:10-17 which describes Jacob's dream at Bethel:

And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. Gen.28:12.

The rabbis speculated on the reasons why the angels should go to and fro between the heavens and the earth, or rather between the throne of glory and the sleeping Jacob, and concluded that they were comparing the two:

And the ministering angels were ascending and descending upon it, and they beheld the face of Jacob, and they said: This is the face like the face of the living creatures which is on the throne of glory. Such (angels) who were (on earth) below were ascending to see the face of Jacob among the faces of the living creatures, (for it was) like the face of the living creatures which is on the throne of glory. PdRE 35 (10).

According to Ez.1:10 around the throne of glory there are the likenesses of four living creatures, one being the likeness of a man. The story of Jacob's dream in Genesis provides a further insight into the secrets of heaven since, according to the rabbis, the behaviour of the angels descending and ascending on the ladder



reveals that it is Jacob's likeness that is represented on the throne of glory.

Lam.R. contains the same tradition in a context which is comparable to Midrash Aleph Beth in that it displays the way in which it affects God's mercy:

...the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel: 'Do you not provoke me because you take advantage of the likeness of Jacob which is engraven on my throne...' Lam.R.2.1.

Since Moses was charged with responsibility for the Torah, his merit ensures that the World to Come will be a constant and total Sabbath (11). The passage cited from the Song of Songs seems to reflect the Havdalah service which marks the end of each Sabbath (AB 14.16). Part of the service includes the benediction of perfumed spices. These are believed to soothe the soul of the Sabbath, grieving as the holy day draws to its close.

The Midrash continues through the names of the seven righteous ones, spelling out the effectiveness of the merit of each on the nature of the World to Come. Aaron's merit ensures that there will be no anger in the World to Come (AB 14.17); David's ensures that there will be a monarchy (AB 14.18); and through the merit of Solomon there will be a utopian harmony between the forces of nature (AB 14.19).

Having said something about the contents of the World to Come, the Midrash turns its attention to the question of the structural

relationship between the new heavens and the new earth. The orders of heaven and earth are arrayed opposite one another. They correspond in so far as the former reflects the glory of the Shekinah whilst the latter reflects the glory of the sun (AB 14.20). In Isaiah we find an eschatological passage which seems to form the basis of this comment about the sun and the Shekinah. In Isaiah God's presence becomes the light for the world:

The sun shall no more be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light for you by night; but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down, nor the moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended. Is.60:19-20.

In the New Testament text Revelation this passage from Isaiah is interpreted in terms of a Christian eschatological context:

And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the lamb. Rev.21:23.

The columns of the new world stretch from the heavens to the earth with no firmaments to act as barriers between the earth and the heavens. The righteous, with their new found ability to fly like the angels (12), go up to heaven every day and pray in the presence of God. The contents of the prayer of the righteous act as an illustration to those in the present world of how it is possible to share with the righteous their perfect existence in the World to Come: 'You will repay love to those who know your love...' (AB 14.22).

God's response to the prayer of the righteous bears a message

for the present age. He tells the righteous that before they had even finished praying, their prayers had been received (AB 14.23). Now that they are enjoying the pleasures of the World to Come there is proof that prayers are answered and good deeds have their rewards. Not only are we told that present petitions will be heard and the righteous rewarded in the time to come, but also that in their present distress in this world God is with them. By stating that God is with them in this world and that he will rescue them in this world and take them to a future paradise the author maintains an eschatological fervour in his own time (13). This fervour would encourage a zealous adherence to faith in God and obedience to the Torah amongst his contemporaries. We are told that the righteous are God's *raison d'être*. Nothing else has any meaning for him because everything else is transitory. Only the righteous are destined for eternity.

The recurrent theme in the Midrash of the total destruction of the present world reappears here in a very vivid form. The language of creation is used to describe the end of creation: the heavens and the earth cease to exist. With the earth go dryland, mountains, hills; with the heavens go the sun, the moon, the stars and the constellations (AB 14.26-29). This description of 'un-creation' is evocative of a biblical passage where the prophet Jeremiah foresees the horrendous advent of the Babylonian armies:

I looked on the earth, and lo, it was waste and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light. I looked on the mountains, and lo, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro. Jer.4:23-24.

All is annihilated except the righteous who are 'the sons of the

World to Come'. When they attain the World to Come then they have attained their destiny. Their eternal existence is as sure as the eternal existence of the World to Come since both are interdependent: the World to Come is created for the righteous, and the righteous are destined for the World to Come. Is.66:22 is referred to again to prove that the new world and the descendants of Abraham belong together.

The next question the Midrash addresses which marks the end of this chapter concerns the nature of the physical existence planned for the righteous in the World to Come (AB 14.32). Eternal existence is defined initially as a thousand years, and the chapter ends with a quotation from Ps.90:4 which states that a thousand years are the equivalent of a day in the sight of God. This would seem to infer that the righteous live for one 'divine' day. In rabbinic tradition there is a debate over the life-span, in which a phrase from Lam.3:23, New every morning, is used to argue that every day God creates a new company of angels, and at the end of every day those angels cease to exist. This debate is known to the author of the Midrash and incorporated into an earlier chapter where the creation of the angels is discussed (14). In the previous chapter we were told that the righteous are to be like the angels in appearance (15). Perhaps they are also to be like the angels in their initial life-span of one 'divine' day in the World to Come.

For a thousand years the righteous are said to exist, like Moses, aged, but still physically intact. Moses is described in such a way in to Deut.34:7, a passage alluded to in our Midrash:

Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

After a thousand years each of the righteous is to be recreated. They are to be transformed from old people to youths, male and female alike. The physical perfection of the righteous is to be based on the idea of perpetual adolescence.

If this idea seems too far-fetched to the reader, the Midrash suggests that the lives of Abraham and Sarah are brought to mind. Sarah expressed incredulity and mirth when she overheard God telling Abraham that his wife would bear a son in the spring:

Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?' Gen.18:11-12.

But God was true to his promise. The implication is made that just as Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age, so the righteous will be restored to the splendour of their youth in the World to Come. Their reward will not be a son but instead they will see the face of the Shekinah, and be sated by the might of God.

The chapter ends by explaining that all these gifts will be given to the righteous because they will be partaking of divine existence in the World to Come. In describing what divine existence is like, the Midrash refers us to Ps.92:

The righteous flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord, and flourish in the courts of

our God. They still bring forth fruit in old age, they are ever full of sap and green, to show that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, there is no unrighteousness in him. Ps.92:12ff.

This chapter provides an exceptionally vivid picture of life in the World to Come. The manner in which the text is presented gives the impression that with each detail given, along with its biblical prooftext, the reality of the new age cannot be denied. Furthermore, a share in the new life is awaiting any son of Israel who would lead a righteous life. The monopoly of the righteous in the World to Come underlines this point. Abraham ensured the creation of the World to Come, and Isaac life in that world. The other five righteous named in this chapter guaranteed its character and contents. This weaves the finely woven bond between the righteous and the World to Come. If you believe in the reality of the World to Come then that belief must involve the righteous inhabiting it. They will take the place of the angels and attend God's throne to enjoy his presence. The imperative to an individual to be righteous is tempered by the paradise that awaits him. Furthermore, the merit of the seven righteous ones has ensured the existence of the new world: already much has been achieved by their lives.

## Notes

1. See 2 Sam.12:5; see further Sawyer, Introduction to Biblical Hebrew, p.55.
2. Cf the tradition concerning the 36 just men on whom the world was founded; see G. Scholem, The Messianic Idea, pp.251-256.
3. See the commentary on AB 2 where another popular interpretation of this phrase from Gen.2:4 is discussed which concludes that God created the world with the letter ך.
4. Gen.R.12.9 contains the full exegesis which has been abbreviated in our Midrash.
5. See AB 4.1 where the angels, in a similar manner, voice their opposition to the creation of man.
6. AB 3.3.
7. See also Gen.15:5-6, 22:17-18.
8. For a discussion of the Akedah in Jewish midrash see Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, pp.193-227.
9. This tradition is distinct from the idea that the souls of the righteous pre-exist beneath the throne of glory; cf AB 2.10 and commentary.
10. See also Gen.R.63.12; b.Hull.91b; also the prayer book liturgy for the 2nd day of New Year. Also see Genesis targumim (Neofiti and Fragmentary) on Gen.22:12 (Le Déaut, Targum du Pentateuque, pp.270-271).
11. In the next chapter the rôle of the Torah in the World to Come becomes central. The new world is described as a Beth HaMidrash where the righteous can experience the debates between God and Moses.
12. Cf AB 13.3 and commentary.
13. The use of paradise, the Garden of Eden, as a metaphor for the World to Come is discussed in the commentary on AB 6.
14. AB 5.1 and commentary.
15. See AB 13.3 and commentary.

15.1. Sadhe Zayin, Goph Heth - Because he shines and moves from the place of his glory to the World to Come. And he sits in his dwelling in the height like a great wise man, for the world is filled with his wisdom, and his understanding is limitless and beyond measure, as it is said, Great is our Lord etc. (Ps.147:5).

2. And all the righteous of the World to Come fly off with their wings, and they live a life of study before the throne of glory and in the Beth HaMidrash of the Holy One, blessed be He, on high for three hundred and sixty five thousand myriad years. Then Moses stands by him as an interpreter, before the Holy One, blessed be He, and his voice goes from one end of the world to the other. The Shekinah is on the right hand side of the throne of glory, and Moses is on the left, and two pillars of fire are on his right and two pillars of flame are on his left.

3. But where is it said that Moses was standing as an interpreter? As it is said, (While) I stood etc. ( between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up into the mountain, saying...). (Deut.5:5). 'I stood' is not said here, but 'I stand'. This teaches: that when the herald goes forth from before the Holy One, blessed be He, and says: 'Who amongst you would want to stand before me as an interpreter?' as it is said, To whom will he teach knowledge? (Is.28:9), the righteous reply and say: 'The one who was is the one who will be, the one who was the interpreter on Mount



Sinai.' As it is said, And you stand (here with me and I will tell you all the commandment and the statutes and the ordinances which you will teach them and which they will do in the land that I give to them to possess). (Deut.5:31). Now Moses will also be the interpreter of halakic traditions and Zerubbabel of the Haggadah, as it is said, On that day, (says the Lord of Hosts,) I will take you (Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, my servant, says the Lord, and put you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you, says the Lord of Hosts). (Hag.2:23).

4. And the Holy One, blessed be He, was expounding the Torah in the presence of the righteous in seventy languages. And each language has four hundred and ninety six myriad expressions. And on the basis of each expression he declares a hundred and twenty thousand myriad decisions afterwards, as it is said, I, the Lord, speak what is true etc. (Is.45:19). And the Holy One, blessed be He, has been illuminating the eyes of the righteous with the light of the Torah, as it is said, The commandment of the Lord is pure. (Ps.19:9). And he delights in the words of wise decisions, as it is said, The precepts of the Lord are right etc. (Ps.19:8).

5. And what is the midrash which he expounds? He says to them: 'Righteous of the world, mighty (in strength) who do charitable deeds, and acts of loving kindness, giants of Torah, all Torah and all wisdom and every commandment which I gave for you to do, I gave you only for your welfare, so that you might be found worthy and inherit the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life. 6. I spoke to you

only for your welfare so that the Torah would come and save you from the judgment of Gehenna.

7. When I said to you, "Keep the commandments and do charitable deeds and acts of loving kindness", I spoke to you only for your welfare, so that you might live the life of this world and be worthy of the life of the World to Come, as it is said, He taught me and he said (to me, 'Let your heart hold fast to my words, keep my commandments and live). (Prov.4:4).

8. When I said to you, "Observe my sabbaths", I spoke to you only for your welfare so that you might be worthy of the World to Come which is all one sabbath.

9. When I said to you, "Observe food laws", I spoke to you only for your welfare so that you might be worthy of the food of mighty ones, as it is said, Man ate the bread of mighty ones, (he sent them food in abundance). (Ps.78:25). And 'man' means none other than Moses, as it is said, The man Moses was very meek etc. (Num.12:3). From here [we deduce that] the Holy One, blessed be He, gave manna to Israel only because of the merit of Moses.

10. When I said to you, "Keep the Passover", I spoke to you only for your welfare so that the angels of destruction might not have power over you, as it is said, He will not allow the destroyer etc. (Ex.12:23).

11. When I said to you, "Build me the Temple", I spoke to you only for

your welfare so that you might be worthy of the building of Zion, as it is said, For the Lord built Zion. (Ps.102:16).

12. I said to you, "Make me a tabernacle", so that you might be worthy of the building of Jerusalem, as it is said, [He] builds Jerusalem etc. (Ps.147:2).

13. I said to you, "Light the lamp before me", [I spoke to you] only for your welfare so that the lamp might come and atone for your lives, for it is read 'a lamp', as it is said, A lamp of the Lord is the soul of etc. (Prov.20:27).

14. I said to you, "Burn the incense before me", so that there might be atonement for you, and so that Satan might keep away from you and his eyes be blinded, as it is said, And he gave the incense etc. and he stood between the dead etc. (Num.17:12-13 [Heb.], 16:47-48 [Eng.]).

15. I said to you, "Offer sacrifice before me", so that the blood might atone for your lives, for it is read, 'blood', as it is said, For the blood makes atonement by reason of the life. (Lev.17:11).

16. I said to you, "Blow the shofar of the ram before me at New Year", so that I might remember on your behalf the righteousness of Abraham your father who bound Isaac, his son, before me, and that your prayer might come up before me with the sound of the trumpet, as it is said, [Blessed] are the people who know the sound of the trumpet etc. (Ps.89:16). And so that you might deserve to hear the

sound of my great shofar which is on high. For I blow it for your sake, and I proclaim future liberty for you and to gather your exiles to Jerusalem, as it is said, And on that day he will blow etc. (Is.27:13).

17. And I said to you, "Afflict yourselves before me on the Day of Atonement", so that I might forgive your sins, and I will write you in the Book of Life, as it is said, For it is a Day of Atonement etc. (Lev.23:28).

18. I said to you, "Make a booth", so that I might spread out for you the fallen booth of (David), a booth of peace, a booth of clouds, as it is said, On that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David etc. (I will repair its breaches, and I will raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old). (Amos 9:11).

19. I said to you, "Make fringes on your clothes", so that I might clothe you in the garments of salvation and wrap round you the robe of righteousness, as it is said, I will rejoice greatly in the Lord etc. (Is.61:10).

20. I said to you, "Tie on tefillin", so that I might tie on you a garland of holiness and kingship for the World to Come, as it is said, In that day the Lord of Hosts will be... (Is.28:5).

21. I said to you, "You will eat and be sated, and always bless my name after eating and drinking", and I will remove sickness from your midst, as it is said, And you will serve the Lord. (Ex.23:25).

'And you will serve' - this is the recitation of the Shema, and the morning and evening prayer. 'And he will bless your bread' - this is the blessing over meals and over fruits. And if you do this, it fulfils the scripture concerning you: And I will remove sickness from your midst. (Ex.23:25).'

22. Then the righteous say before the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Lord of the Universe, why did you permit incest for the gentiles but prohibit incest for us?' The Holy One, blessed be He, replied and said to them, 'Because I made them read over the Torah but they did not accept it. As soon as I saw that they did not receive the Torah and they did not fulfil the commandments, I raised up from them seven prophets, witnesses against them, to convict them with the judgment of Gehenna. These are the seven prophets, trustworthy witnesses: Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, and Elihu, son of Barachel the Buzite, and Job, and Jethro, and Balaam; and there are some who say Balaam and his father.

23. And afterwards I permitted them incest, and I harnessed them like horses and like asses, for they do not enter into the life of the World to Come.' As it is said, Whose flesh is like flesh of asses, and their semen like horses' semen. (Ez.23:20). I have consigned them to Gehenna on the great day of judgment to be food for Gehenna, like trees that are food for fires, as it is said, For their worm will not die etc. (Is.66:24).

24. But where is it said that the Holy One, blessed be He, permits

them incest? As it is said, He stood and measured etc. (Hab.3:6). What is meant by 'he permitted the nations' (Hab.3:6)? It teaches that when the Holy One, blessed be He, saw that the nations of the world would not accept the Torah and they would not fulfil the commandments, he permitted them all the incest that is mentioned in the Torah. And he handed them over to Nigrasgiel, prince of Gehenna. And he said to him, 'All these creatures will be on your list except this people, who accepted the Torah that they might not be on your list.' As it is said, It is all in the writing etc. (1 Chron.28:19). Nigrasgiel replies and says, 'Lord of the Universe, why is it that they will not be on my list and that I have no business with them?' He says to him, 'This people are mine.' As it is said, Not like these etc. (Jer.10:16). And what does 'not like these' mean? It teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Nigrasgiel, 'Not like these nations of the world. For they inherit Gehenna because they did not accept the Torah and they did not fulfil the commandments. I assigned everything to the share of Jacob and Israel, for they accepted the Torah and fulfilled the commandments. I have prepared for them the Garden of Eden and all the delicacies and the good things of the World to Come.' As it is said, Do good, Lord, to those that are good. (Ps.125:4). And 'the good ones' are none other than Israel, as it is said, Your loved ones are better than wine. (Sg of Sgs 1:4).

25. What does, For it is he who forms everything (Jer.10:16) mean? It teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, formed the whole world only on account of Israel, as it is said, He hangs the world upon nothing. (Job 26:7) And what does 'upon nothing' mean? It

teaches that the world exists only because of him who belittles himself. What is the nation that belittles itself? Say ' This is Israel', as it is said, A people whom I formed etc. (Is.43:21).

What did Abraham say? And I am dust and ashes. (Gen.18:27).

What did Moses and Aaron say? And what are we? (Ex.16:18).

What did David say? But I am a worm and no man etc. (Ps.22:6).

And what did Solomon say? For (I am) too stupid. (Prov.30:2).

And 'man' means nothing other than Moses, as it is said, Also the man (Ex.11:3). And there is no 'Adam' except the first man, as it is said, He blessed them and called their name Adam. (Gen.5:2). Solomon said, 'This is written about me: For he is wiser than all men. (1 Kgs 5:11 [Heb.], 4:31 [Eng.]). I am too stupid to be a man - to be Moses, for it is read 'a man'. I had to look to Moses who wrote in the Torah: And he shall not multiply wives for himself, nor shall he multiply for himself horses, nor silver and gold etc. (Deut.17:16-17). I transgressed these three prohibitions.'

26. Where is it said that Solomon transgressed the prohibition about multiplying [women] for himself? as it is said, He had three hundred wives. (1 Kgs 11:3). And where is it said that he transgressed the prohibition by multiplying horses for himself? As it is said, And Solomon had forty thousand horses. (1 Kgs 5:6 [Heb.], 4:26 [Eng.]). And where is it said (that he transgressed the prohibition) by multiplying silver and gold for himself? As it is said, Silver was of no account etc. (1 Kgs 10:21). And what does 'I have not the understanding of Adam' mean? Solomon said, 'I had to look on the first Adam for whom everything was created ( and given) into his hand. He was as tall as the distance from the earth up to the

firmament, and his two eyeballs were like two globes of the sun. And he was as strong and powerful as the mighty ones on high. He only married one woman, yet through her came his death, and for his generation and for the generations of his generation, until the end of every generation, as it is said, For dust you etc. (Gen.3:19). What does 'and all the generations of the world' mean? As it is said, And the dust returns to the earth. (Eccles.12:7). And why did Solomon marry a thousand wives? Only so he said, so that 'I might have a thousand sons, one from each, in a year; in twenty years twenty thousand sons - so that no creatures and no flesh and blood will be able to have power over me, or do anything to me.' The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, 'Solomon, my son, you take a thousand wives so that you might have a thousand sons in a year! I give you one son, who has only half a body.' And the son of Solomon was Rehoboam etc. (1 Chron.3:10).

27. Furthermore, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to the them, to the righteous, 'You said to me , "You prohibited us to commit incest". Where there was something that I forbade you in the words of the Torah, there is something corresponding to it that I permitted you:

28. I forbade it with the betrothed, but I permitted it with wives;

I forbade you a man's wife, but I permitted you the widow;

I forbade you a daughter, but I permitted you a [sister's] daughter

I forbade you a brother's daughter, but I permitted you a wife and a sister at a time when she was not alive;

I forbade you a grand-daughter, I permitted you a grand-niece;



I forbade you the blood of a menstruant, I permitted you the blood of virginity;

I forbade you the harlots, I permitted you women who have been raped;

I forbade you the gentile woman, I permitted you the released captive;

I forbade you the menstruant, I permitted you the daughter of eight days;

I forbade you blood, I permitted you liver;

I forbade you the sinew of the hip, I permitted you the spleen;

I forbade you the fat which is in the kidneys, I permitted you the fat which is in the tail;

I forbade you meat with milk, I permitted you fish's flesh with milk;

I forbade you cattle when they are dead, I permitted you fish when it is dead;

I forbade you tendons, I permitted you the udder with milk inside;

I forbade you horse's flesh; I permitted you bull's inners;

I forbade you milk which is in cattle, I permitted you the milk which is in the gazelle and deer;

I forbade you carrion and prey, I permitted you truffles and mushrooms.

29. I have made you rulers with the Holy Ones of the heights, and I have called you sons of the High Ones.' As it is said, I said [you are] gods. (Ps.82:6).

30. The righteous reply and say before him, 'Lord of the universe, you worked well, you punished well, you spoke well, you expounded

well, you interpreted well, you explained well, you forbade well, you permitted well, and all your ways are love and truth.'

31. As it is said, All the ways of the Lord are love and truth to those who keep etc. (Ps.25:10). 'Those who keep his covenant' - these are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who keep the covenant of the Holy One, as it is said, He spoke, and it says, And Abraham circumcised etc. (Gen.21:4). 'And his testimonies' - these are Joseph and all the prophets and all the pious ones, as it is said, Testimonies are in Joseph. (Ps.81:5). Where does it say 'all...', as it is said, These are the testimonies. (Deut.4:45). Where is 'and all the prophets' derived from? as it is said, Of old you spoke in a vision. (Ps.89:20 [Heb.] 89:19 [Eng.]). And this 'vision' refers to prophecy and nothing else, as it is said, The vision of Isaiah etc. (Is.1:1).

32. The pious ones are none other than the first righteous ones and nothing else, as it is said, The pious exalt in glory. (Ps.149:5). For they inherit glory and greatness in this world and in the World to Come. 'In this world' where from? As it is said, The wise will inherit glory etc. (Prov.3:35). And 'the World to Come' where from? As it is said, He will cause them to inherit a throne of glory. (1 Sam.2:8). And you will say, I have set a helper. (Ps.89:20 [Heb.] 89:19 [Eng.]). And the 'helper' is none other than the Torah, as it is said, In truth I have no help. (Job.6:13). And 'Mighty One' is none other than the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is said, The Lord strong and mighty. (Ps.24:8). I have exalted one chosen from the people. (Ps.89:20 [Heb.] 89:19 [Eng.]). And the 'chosen one' is none other than Moses, as it is said, Unless Moses, my chosen one etc. (Ps.106:23).

33. What does 'he stood in the breach' mean? It teaches that when Israel had made the calf, Moses stood in prayer and supplication before the Holy One, blessed be He. And he was a great intercessor on their behalf, on behalf of Israel, before their Father who is in heaven. And he begged mercy on their behalf, for every spirit that is in the world, in the west, in the east, in the north and in the south. And the heat and anger of the Holy One, blessed be He, withdrew from Israel, as it is said, And the Lord repented concerning the evil that he had thought to do to his people. (Ex.32:14).

The chapter ends.

In this the longest chapter of the Midrash the fourth alphabet combination begins. This combines the middle letter with the first and so on (1), but rather than begin with the first pair of letters, א"ב, we begin with the seventh, ז"ח. The subject of this fourth and final part of Midrash Aleph Beth is life in the World to Come.

In this chapter the Torah is a central theme. In the previous chapter we were told that by the merit of Moses the World to Come would be a continuous fulfilment of the Sabbath command (1a). In the first part of the present chapter this idea is taken up and developed, and we find in the World to Come the righteous participating in the Beth HaMidrash of the heavens. Their reward is made perfect as they witness the making of Torah. God expounds the Torah and Moses interprets. God explains to the righteous that he gave them the Torah in the old world so that they might have a share in the new world. It is explained that every command given to God's people was given for their own benefit and, presumably, not as a result of a capricious whim on the part of their creator.

In the second part God's apparent lenient attitude towards the gentiles, as regards his law is discussed and explained. In particular the Midrash takes up the question of sexual licence and asks why the gentiles have no restrictions laid on them, whereas God prescribes sexual boundaries for the Jews. The chapter ends in praise of Moses whose self-sacrifice caused God to repent of his

anger that had been stirred against the people when they made and worshipped the golden calf.

Two pairs of letters appear at the beginning of this chapter:  $\aleph''\beth$  and  $\pi''\zeta$ . However, only the letters  $\aleph''\beth$  are actually used in the opening phrase. Furthermore, the letters  $\pi''\zeta$  form the basis of the next chapter. In this chapter they provide two verbs  $\beth\zeta$  'he shines' and  $\aleph\aleph$  'he moves' used to describe how God takes his place in the World to Come as a 'great wise man'. God has a new role: instead of sitting on his throne of glory constantly in judgment on the events taking place in the old world, he can now sit with the righteous sharing with them his wisdom and the secrets of his Torah.

The theme of God's Torah as a measuring rod for righteousness has occurred throughout the Midrash, but such a central position for the Torah as found in this chapter can be compared only to chapters 2 and 3. In chapter 2 there are two appendices; one describes the beauty and splendour of the Torah personified as a woman, the second the betrothal of Moses to the Torah (2). The centrality of the Torah continues into chapter three where we are told that the present world was created for the sake of Israel alone, and that is only because they are the ones who are destined to receive the Torah:

I did not create my world except for the sake of Israel...For they practise the Torah and fulfil the commandments. For the world does not exist except by their merit, since the reciting of the Torah does not cease from their lips for one hour.  
AB 3.3.

In the World to Come God is installed on the throne of glory as a wise man, and the righteous, using their new wings (3), fly up and attend the heavenly Beth HaMidrash seated around him (AB 15.2). The tradition that God will teach the Torah to the righteous in the World to Come is common in rabbinic literature. For example:

R. Joshua b. Levi said: whosoever enters synagogues and houses of study in this world will be privileged to enter synagogues and houses of study in the time to come. How is this known? As it is said, Happy are they that dwell in your house, they will forever praise you. (Ps.84:5). Deut.R.7.1.

b.Bab.M.85b-86a contains various traditions concerning the heavenly Beth HaMidrash. They differ from the descriptions found in our Midrash in that in our Midrash the Beth HaMidrash is represented as something belonging to the future eschatological age. At that time the World to Come will be established for the righteous, and as part of their resurrected life they will share in the midrashic debates of the heavens. God is described as moving to this new rôle of sage in the future World to Come. Conversely, in the Talmud the heavenly Beth HaMidrash is something that co-exists with the present world, and at death each deserving rabbi ascends to it straight away. This is vividly illustrated by the tradition which records the death of Rabbah b. Nahmani:

Now they were disputing in the Heavenly Academy thus: If the bright spot preceded the white hair, he is unclean; if the reverse, he is clean (cf.Lev.13:1-3). If in doubt, the Holy One, blessed be He, ruled, He is clean; whilst the entire Heavenly Academy maintained, He is unclean. Who shall decide it? - said they. Rabbah b. Nahmani; for he said, 'I am pre-eminent in the laws of

leprosy and tents.' A messenger was sent for him, but the angel of death could not approach him, because he did not interrupt his studies (even for a moment). In the meantime a wind blew and caused a rustling in the bushes which he imagined to be a troop of soldiers. 'Let me die,' he exclaimed, 'rather than be delivered into the hands of the state.' As he was dying he, he exclaimed, 'Clean, clean!' when a heavenly voice cried out, 'Happy are you, O Rabbah b. Nahmani, whose body is pure and whose soul has departed in purity!' A missive fell from heaven in Pumbeditha, (upon which was written,) 'Rabbah b. Nahmani has been summoned by the Heavenly Academy.' b.B.Mez.86a (4).

The contrast between this tradition and that found in our Midrash lies between futuristic eschatology and realised eschatology. According to the Talmud an individual rabbi will pass straight from the context of an earthly Beth hamidrash to one in the heavens. In our Midrash transference to the heavenly Beth hamidrash is a corporate experience shared at once by all the righteous past and present when God inaugurates the new age.

Urbach argues that the concept of a heavenly Beth HaMidrash came about as part of the rabbinic development away from belief in angels and demons, who were understood to inhabit the heavenly court, to a greater appreciation of the Torah as an explanation for all aspects of life (5). Along with the diminishing of the role of angels comes the diminishing of the idea of their realm, the heavenly court. In their place comes the centrality of the Torah and the heavenly Beth HaMidrash. The inhabitants of the heavenly Beth hamidrash replace the inhabitants of the heavenly court: the rabbis replace the angels. In our Midrash we are dealing with a different

eschatological perspective which concentrates on the future establishment of the World to Come. In that vision of the future the righteous, resurrected to eternal life, replace the angels in heaven (6). Urbach's thesis fits well with the anti-angel tendency, and the angel/humanity rivalry we have noted throughout our Midrash. In that context this lengthy chapter on the heavenly Beth HaMidrash can be understood as an eschatological vision of a new heavenly court. God's advisors are no longer the angels, who have persistently come between God and his people from creation to the present time (7), but his righteous ones. The covenant between God and Israel has reached its perfect climax when the two parties sit side by side in the heavens discussing midrash. At God's right-hand stands the Shekinah, and at his left-hand there is no archangel, instead there is Moses, the bridegroom of the Torah, interpreting God's will for the new world.

According to the Midrash, God will expound the Torah expertly in seventy different languages (AB 15.4), a number which symbolises all the languages of the world. This does not infer a universalism as regards God's salvation through his Torah, that is that all the nations of the world can share in God's gift. The old world has past away, only the World to Come exists, and, as was stressed in the previous chapter (8), only God and the righteous exist in it. God expounding the Torah in seventy languages reflects the contemporary diaspora situation of the author. The righteous themselves reflect the seventy nations of the world in the sense that Judaism has spread throughout the world and its adherents speak the languages of their respective countries. In the World to



Come God's exposition will reflect this linguistic diversity.

We are told that Moses will be the interpreter regarding the halakhic type of tradition, being qualified by his work on Mt Sinai when he received the Torah from heaven (AB 15.3). Zerubbabel will be the interpreter of haggadah. Zerubbabel is a 'messianic type'. He has a messianic pedigree in that he is the descendent of the tribe of Judah who has a particular association with Zion as governor and builder of its second temple (9). In Gen. Rabbah Zerubbabel's name appears in a eulogy to the tribe of Judah derived from Gen.49:8. He is the last individual mentioned of the tribe before the Messiah:

...from the tribe of Judah there came forth Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel...Furthermore, the royal Messiah will be descended from the tribe of Judah...Thus from the tribe of Judah were descended Solomon, who built the first temple, and Zerubbabel who built the second; and (from him will be descended) the royal Messiah, who will rebuild the temple. Thus we find these two tribes, Judah and Levi, are the most distinguished in their lineage of all Israel, since in them were royalty and priesthood. Gen.R.97 (NV).

In our Midrash, instead of building a temple the Messiah plays a vital rôle in the judgment of the old world and the establishment of the new. And part of that new age is not a new temple, but instead a Beth HaMidrash in the heavens. Gen. Rabbah singled out the tribes of Levi and Judah as supreme, and this throws light on why the two figures, Moses and Zerubbabel, are mentioned alongside one another in Midrash Aleph Beth: the former represents the tribe of Levi and the latter the tribe of Judah.

The content of the tradition which God expounds to the righteous

is midrash in its purest sense. In its discourse God elucidates all the mysteries of scripture beginning with the reason why he gave Israel the Torah on Mt Sinai. The righteous learn that the Torah was given in order to give life in the present world and to make people worthy of life in the World to Come. In this apologetic God argues that the Torah was not given to make life burdensome, but to protect the relationship between him and his people which was being constantly undermined in an hostile world. The picture that is drawn in this passage shows the Torah as the means of contact and communication between God and his people in the present world. The Torah is a precious gift that remains a part of God even when it has been given away. This point is vividly illustrated in a story related in Exodus Rabbah:

It (the giving of the Torah) can be compared to the only daughter of a king whom another king married. When he wished to return to his country and take his wife with him, he (the father) said to him: 'My daughter, whose hand I have given you, is my only child. I cannot part with her, neither can I say to you: "Do not take her," for she is now your wife. This favour, however, I would request of you; wherever you go to live, have a chamber ready for me that I may dwell with you, for I cannot leave my daughter.' Ex.R.33.1.

Various commands from the Torah relating to festivals and holy days and life in general are explained in terms of their effectiveness in maintaining the right relationship between God and Israel (AB 15.6-21). For example, the Israelites were commanded to keep the Passover so that the angel of death would pass over their houses and spare their first-born; they were told to burn incense to blind the eyes of Satan; God told them to wear fringes and to tie Tefillin as a sign on their garments in the World to Come (10).

Attention is drawn to the atonement for Israel's sins made possible through God's mercy and made known through the Torah. Originally, the Midrash explains, atonement was made possible through blood sacrifices as recorded in the Torah:

For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood which makes atonement, by reason of the life.  
Lev.17:11.

After the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. cultic sacrifice no longer existed as a means of atonement. But God did not leave his people without access to his mercy and the shofar becomes the tangible sign of God's forgiveness for sin. The Midrash explains that God is reminded of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac when he hears the sound of the shofar. The shofar is a reminder to him because when Abraham was about to offer up Isaac, God provided a ram to be sacrificed in his stead (11). The same tradition is recorded in the Talmud:

R. Abbahu said: Why do we blow the ram's horn? The Holy One, blessed be He, said: Sound before me a ram's horn so that I may remember on your behalf the binding of Isaac the son of Abraham, and account it to you as if you had bound yourselves before me. b.R.H.16a.

Through this lengthy explanation, which fuses the concept of Torah with mercy, the Midrash makes it clear that the Torah can only be understood as a gift from God given out of his unending love for his people. It can be understood as a benefit for the people to whom it was given: it has protected them from the time of the

Exodus, it enabled them to flourish in Jerusalem, through its power of atonement, it guaranteed a perfect relationship between God and Israel, and through the command to ask for God's blessing at meal times, it even ensured a healthy life for them. The Torah was given to support Israel in the present world, and to ensure that they could share the World to Come with God for eternity.

The righteous are presented as full participants in this debate in the heavenly Beth-HaMidrash so they respond to this explanation by asking God why the gentiles were permitted things which were forbidden to Israel through the Torah (AB 15.22). To answer this question the concept of the World to Come is introduced once more along with the tradition that originally the gentiles had been offered the Torah but they had refused it. This is a common tradition in Jewish literature and is usually used in the context of explaining why God and Israel share a unique relationship. For example, in Pesikta Rabbati the following comment is made when interpreting Ps.40:5:

R. Hanina bar Papa said: The verse in the Psalm refers to all the wonderful works and thoughts which you used to make the nations of the earth accept your Torah, even though it was already known and revealed to you that they would not accept it. Why then did you go through the motions of going around and pressing it upon them? In order to double for us the reward we are to be given for accepting it. Piska 15.2.

The unique relationship between God and Israel is based on Israel's readiness to accept God's Torah which, in a sense, prompts God's unending love and partiality for them.

Although superficially the gentiles appear to be blessed by God since they enjoy a type of liberty forbidden to Jews especially as regards sexual relations, in reality their behaviour simply illustrates their refusal to accept the Torah. As a result they will be excluded from the World to Come and instead meet their fate in Gehenna. The prohibitions are the true blessings because adherence to them means life as opposed to death. In Midrash Rabbah a similar question concerning the encouragement to obey the Torah in relation to its sexual laws is raised:

R. Joshua b. Levi expounded: Why was the section dealing with consanguineous relationships placed next to the section dealing with holiness? Only to teach you that in every case where you find a fence against sexual immorality you also find sanctity. Lev.R.24.6.

Here the compunction to obey is not directly linked to eschatological reward and punishment, but to the desire to be holy. Sexual purity leads to holiness and that enables an individual to be righteous.

The Midrash illustrates how God's mercy was not reserved for Israel alone. Even after the gentiles had refused to accept the Torah, God raised up seven gentile prophets to call the nations to repentance. It is never too late to accept God's Torah; it is still being offered universally. Israel's uniqueness lies not in their being offered the Torah, but in their acceptance of it. The constant call to the gentiles to repent is reflected in a passage from Lev. Rabbah where we are told that even subsequent generations of gentiles who did not have the benefit of the seven prophets, have the example of converts to Judaism who are living witnesses to God's Torah:

R. Simeon b. Gamaliel related: Once, when I was on a journey, a man met me and approached me like one who comes up to another threateningly. He said to me: 'You say that seven prophets have arisen among the heathen nations of the world, and warned them, and (these, not having heeded), descended to Gehenna?' I answered him: 'It is so.' (He said) 'Then ever since those seven generations the heathen nations of the world can say: "The Torah has not been given to us, nor have we so far been given warning; why then should we descend to Gehenna?"' I answered him, 'My son, thus have the Sages taught in the Mishnah: When a would-be proselyte comes to accept Judaism, a hand should be stretched out towards him to bring him beneath the wings of the Shekinah. Thus from that time onwards, the proselytes of every generation warn their own generation.' Lev.R.2.9 (12).

At the end of time for the present world there is no future for gentiles who have not converted to Judaism and accepted the Torah. Each generation has had its opportunity to repent, God has been merciful to all the nations of the earth, but they rejected his gift. Their names are on Nigrasgiel's list and their fate is Gehenna (13). The gentiles might have seemed blessed with liberty in this world to pursue the desires of the flesh without any boundaries, but their pleasure is transitory (AB 15.24). In contrast, the children of Israel, who observed the restrictions on their sexual relations laid down in the Torah, can enjoy the utopian pleasures of the World to Come for eternity (14).

By arguing that the attractions of the World to Come are reserved for those who adhere to the Torah, the Midrash is led into the familiar theme that God created the world for the sake of Israel alone. Although familiar, however, a new feature of the theme is

highlighted in that the characteristic of humility is seen to be common to the major righteous figures of Israelite history. Abraham, Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon are all shown to be humble men by their words found in the Bible (AB 15.25). Solomon prompts a lengthy discussion on the subject since there is an apparent contradiction to be explained (AB 15.26). The Bible describes him as 'wiser than all men' (15), on the one hand, but on the other, in his own words (as the author of Proverbs) he describes himself as follows:

...I am too stupid to be a man. I have not the understanding of Adam. I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of the Holy One.  
Prov.30:2-3.

The Midrash explains in the words of Solomon firstly, that the first 'man' mentioned in this passage is Moses who is described in Ex.11:3 as 'the man Moses', and secondly, that the second should be understood as the first man 'Adam', rather than as the generic term for humanity. Solomon concludes then that he is stupider than Moses. An illustration of this is that in the Torah Moses wrote that a king should not have a vast number of wives or horses or great amounts of silver and gold. Solomon behaved ignorantly in his disobedience of this command. Likewise, when he compares himself to Adam who was a man of super-human qualities bearing to perfection the image of God, he pales into insignificance (16). However, there is an ironic comparison that can be made between these two figures. Solomon earned a 'black-mark' in Jewish tradition by being the husband of many wives, similarly Adam, who, unlike Solomon, was a good man in the sense that he was the husband of

only one wife, was like Solomon through suffering condemnation through his marriage, since his one wife caused him to die.

This section ends with a further ironic observation about Solomon. The reason he married so many wives was to ensure that his lineage would create a vast dynasty: by twenty years he would have twenty thousand sons. God thwarted his plans by giving him one successor, Rehoboam, who, according to our Midrash, 'has only half a body'. This comment would seem to belong to the context of the division of the Israelite kingdom after the death of Solomon. This division is prophesied by the Ahijah who symbolically tore up a garment into twelve pieces signifying the twelve tribes of Israel (17). He gave ten pieces to the rebel Jeroboam, and only one, symbolising the tribe of Judah, he put aside for Rehoboam. Rehoboam, instead of being head of a gigantic nation and dynasty, succeeds to a fraction of the kingdom carved out by his grandfather David and consolidated by his father Solomon. There is an inevitable contrast to be seen between Abraham, the first and greatest of the righteous, and Solomon the last and least. Abraham had no heirs to ensure the continuance of his line, only faith in God's promise that he would be the father of a great nation. Whereas Solomon prefers to have countless wives and concubines in a frantic attempt to guarantee his line. Abraham's faith in God's action is realised, but Solomon's human efforts come to nothing (18).

After the digression on the question of Solomon's sins, the Midrash returns to the subject of sexual licence that had been denied adherents to the Torah in the old world (AB 15.27ff). It is



necessary to mention at this stage that the righteous are understood to be righteous men. This is made evident by the discussion of the commandments found in this chapter where the sexual laws are described from an exclusively male perspective. Later in the Midrash this point is further clarified when we are told that the righteous will be joined by their wives in the World to Come (19).

Here the righteous are told that the things that were forbidden to them in the old world have to be balanced against the things that were permitted at the same time (AB 15.28). This passage is based on a Talmudic comment made by Yaltha, R. Nahman's wife who presents the following argument in order to discover within the confines of the Torah a means of eating milk with meat. The examples she uses are not always identical with those found in the Midrash but the argument is the same:

Yaltha once said to R. Nahman, 'Observe, for everything that the Divine Law has forbidden us it has permitted us an equivalent: it has forbidden us blood but it has permitted us liver; it has forbidden us intercourse during menstruation but it has permitted us the blood of purification; it has forbidden us the fat of cattle but it has permitted us the fat of wild beasts; it has forbidden us swine's flesh but it has permitted us the brain of the 'shibbuta'; it has forbidden us the 'girutha' but it has permitted us the tongue of fish; it has forbidden us the married woman but it has permitted us the divorcee during the lifetime of her former husband; it has forbidden us the brother's wife but it has permitted us the levirate marriage; it has forbidden us the non-Jewess but it has permitted us the beautiful woman (taken in war). I wish to eat flesh in milk, (where is the equivalent?)' Thereupon R. Nahman said to the butchers, 'Give her roasted udders.' b.Hull.109b.

The tendency is to be blind to and take for granted the wonderful things that God had allowed for his people, and instead bemoan the restrictions. For example, the Midrash argues, although sex with a betrothed is forbidden, sex with a wife is not. The prohibition against adultery means that you can not have sex with another man's wife, but you can still sleep with another man's wife so long as that man is dead. Although you can not have sex with a menstruant from the time of the beginning of the flow of blood to the end of eight days of no bleeding (20), if blood is visible when you have sex with a virgin she is deemed unclean only while the blood flows (21). And although you are forbidden to eat milk with meat, you are permitted to eat udders which comprise both milk and meat (22). The Midrash differs from the Talmudic passage in that it separates the sexual guidelines from those dealing with food, whereas in the Talmud they are intermixed.

At the end of his discourse God reminds the righteous of their reward for having lived out the Torah in the old world (AB 15.29). He has given them a place in the heavens and replaced the angels with them as 'sons of the Most High' (Ps.82:6). The righteous respond by congratulating God not only for his wonderful discourse in the heavenly Beth HaMidrash, but also for all his works, including his judgment of the world (AB 15.30). They praise him with a reference to the words of Ps.25:10:

All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and  
faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and  
his testimonies.

The Midrash shows us that this verse refers, first, to Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob who obeyed the law in their circumcision, despite the fact that the Torah had yet to be revealed to Israel; and secondly, to Joseph, the prophets and the pious ones who are the people who fulfilled God's testimonies (AB 15.31-32). It goes on to display from scripture how the pious, or righteous, gain glory in this world as well as in the World to Come. Using two phrases from Ps.89:20: 'I have set a helper', and: 'one who is mighty', the Torah illustrates how the righteous inherit the World to Come only by the work and aid of God and the Torah. Job declared he had no 'helper' because he is a gentile and, consequently, had no Torah. Moses is a central figure in this process since it is he who mediated the Torah to the people. Moreover, it was Moses who saved the people from destruction as soon as the Torah had been given. While they were still on the mountain after the Torah had been received, God tells Moses that the people had already transgressed his law by making a golden calf and were worshipping it (23). God wants to destroy all the people except Moses, but Moses pleads with him to spare them. As a result of Moses' words God repents of his desire for judgment. This tradition is reflected in Ps.106, referred to by the Midrash:

They made a calf in Horeb and worshipped a molten image. They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass. They forgot God their saviour, who had done great things in Egypt, wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red Sea. Therefore he said he would destroy them - had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him, to turn away his wrath from destroying them. Ps.106:19-23.

This chapter has a two-fold function. First, it stands as an apology for the Torah, and secondly, it encourages those in the present world to keep the Torah in the light of the rewards awaiting

them in the World to Come. The Midrash emphasises the laws regarding sexual relations which might reflect a situation for the author where marriages outside of the community were becoming a threat to its existence. The Torah is presented as something which is not onerous, but rather a wonderful gift recognised as such by Israel alone. Only the righteous of Israel understand that it contains the secret to eternity. All the other nations are destined for the fires of Gehenna. God as the great expounder of Torah explains to the righteous in the World to come that the Torah was given as an act of grace, not only are its rewards to be realised at the end of time, but its balanced justice means it also can be enjoyed in the present. God, the Torah and Moses form a three-fold path to the World to Come (24).

## Notes

1. See the Table of Alphabets
- 1a. AB 14.16 and commentary.
2. AB 2.7-11 and commentary.
3. AB 13.3; 14.21.
4. See also b.Ber.18b; b.Tan.21b; see further Moore, Judaism, vol.3, p.85; Urbach, op.cit., vol.1, pp.307-8 & vol.2, p.822, n.72.
5. Urbach, ibid, vol.1, pp.166-7.
6. See AB 13.3 and commentary.
7. See, e.g., AB 4.1; and chaps 7, 8, and 9.
8. AB 14.25. 9. See Hag. and Zech.
10. See AB 10.3-10, and commentary, where God clothes the righteous in the World to Come.
11. Gen.22:13.
12. In the New Testament St Paul argues in a similar way at the beginning of Romans. On the one hand he castigates his fellow Jews for not acknowledging God despite the fact that they are the recipients of the Torah, and on the other he reprimands the gentiles for not recognising God despite his revelation in creation; see Rom.1:18ff.
13. On Nigrasgiel and other angels associated with Gehenna see AB 7.10 and commentary.
14. In a later chapter the Midrash makes it clear that any sexual privation in this world, will be more than adequately compensated for in the World to Come; see AB 18.4-5.
15. 1 Kgs 5:11 (English: 4:31).
16. For a discussion of Adam's super-human existence in the Garden of Eden see e.g. W.D.Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, pp.36-57.
17. 1 Kgs 11:29-40.

18. In the previous chapter the Midrash emphasises the divine prerogative in the story of Abraham and Sarah; see AB 14.32.
19. See AB 18.5.
20. See e.g. M.Nid.3.4.
21. See e.g. M.Nid.1.3.
22. In the Talmud Yaltha's comments on the balanced nature of the Torah are followed by a discussion of the manner in which an udder may be eaten; see b.Hull.109b-110a.
23. Ex.32.
24. At the end of this chapter God is addressed as 'Father', which is the first title given to him by the Midrash when it forms the word אב from the first two letters of the alphabet; see AB 1.1 and commentary.

16.1. Goph Heth - Because he will take the throne of glory from its place to the World to Come. And he brings from beneath it a thousand thousands and a myriad myriads, all the souls of foetuses that are dead in the belly of their mother because of the sin of their fathers and mothers.

2. And he showed them to the righteous, and says to them, 'My sons, is it your wish that the souls of these might live?' The righteous reply and say, 'Lord of the universe, what are these?' And he replies to them, 'These are the souls of foetuses that died because of the sin of their fathers and did not enter into the world.'

3. The righteous reply and say, 'Lord of the Universe, because of the sin of which of them did they die?' He says to them, 'Because of the sin of their fathers and their mothers.' And where is it said that because of the sin of a father and a mother foetuses die? As it is said, And also because of the sins etc. (Lev.26:39). The righteous reply and say before him, 'Lord of the universe, did you not dictate thus in the Torah, Fathers will not be put to death etc. (Deut.24:16).' The Holy One, blessed be He, replies and says to them, 'I dictated 'sons' but not 'foetuses' because they resemble water. Foetuses are not called sons until they go forth from the belly of their mother, as it is said, For I have borne a son. (Gen.21:7). Thus the father does not mourn him until [he has lived] thirty days. And I also dictated by the hand of Moses, my servant, Bless the fruit of your womb. (Deut.7:13). When is the fruit of the womb blessed? When

its father and mother do God's will in the world, as it is said, Let it not lead [you] to sin etc. (Eccles.5:5). And the works of the hands of humanity are none other than sons and daughters, as it is said, For when he sees his children (the work of my hands within him, they will sanctify my name and they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob. (Is.29:23).

4. The righteous reply and say before him, 'Lord of the universe, if it is your will you will have pity on them for the sake of your great name. You will raise up for them bones and muscles and flesh, and you will stand them upon their feet.' Immediately the Holy One, blessed be He, heard them, he said to them, 'I will do this to them for my own sake, and not for the sake of their fathers and mothers.' As it is said, For my sake, for my own sake (I will do it, for how should it be profaned? My glory I will not give to another). (Is.48.11).

5. What does the Holy One, blessed be He, do then? He speaks his word concerning them, and makes flesh and muscles and bones and marrow and skin come over them. And they live. And he stands them upon their feet. As it is said, For the dead will you work a miracle etc. (Ps.88:10). 'Selah' is nothing other than the World to Come, as it is said, (The witness in the skies) is sure selah. (Ps.89:37). What does, Do the shades rise up and praise thee selah? (Ps.88:10[11 Heb.]), mean? It teaches that when they are alive and standing upon their feet, immediately the cunning of wisdom enters into them and the cunning of understanding, and they open their mouths with wisdom and recite a song with understanding before the Holy One,



blessed be He, for he kills in this world and he brings to life in the World to Come.

6. And what is the song that they recite?

In your hand is the life of the living etc.

But if it is said, 'The life of the living', why is it said, 'The life of the dead'? And if it is said, 'the life of the dead', why is it said, 'The life of all living'? And if it is said, 'The life of all living', why is it said, 'The spirit of all human flesh'? But it teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, sits at his gateway, the life of the living at his right hand, the life of the dead at his left hand, and the life of all living facing him, and the spirit of all human flesh behind him. And all of them were as if eating, drinking, being sated, rejoicing greatly in the splendour of the Shekinah of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is said, For with you is the fountain of life. (Ps.36:9).

7. Before all humanity below used to think a thought or do a deed, their deeds and thoughts went up and came before the Holy One, blessed be He, on high like the noon-day, as it is said, And I, their deeds... (Is.66:18). And every single night and every single evening the evil inclination and the good inclination - all of his soul - are taken up to the firmament, each one, and they show all their deeds of that day to the ministering angels. And the ministering angels go up and show them to the angels of heaven as far as Aravoth. And the angels of Aravoth show it to the servants of glory, and the servants of glory to the watchers and the holy ones, and the watchers and the holy ones to the holy creatures, and the holy creatures to the cherubim of splendour, and the cherubim of

splendour to the prince of fire, and the prince of fire to the winged ones, and the winged ones to the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is said, For a bird of the heavens will carry the voice. (Eccles.10:20). And the Holy One, blessed be He writes on his list the deeds of each one until the Day of Judgment comes before him, as it is said, Is it not laid up with me sealed in my treasures? (Deut.32:34).

The main theme of this short chapter is the destiny of unborn children as regards the World to Come. Their judgment leads into a description of the way in which each person's deeds are monitored in this world in order to provide a record of the good and evil deeds for the Day of Judgment.

The letters פ and נ which appeared at the beginning of the previous chapter without any interpretation (1), are used here to form part of the verb נפל 'to take'. It describes God's action in taking the throne of glory from its new position in the World to Come to bring out from beneath it the souls of the unborn children.

The contents of this chapter presuppose the concept of pre-existence which in rabbinic thought is integrated with that of an all-knowing God. Scriptural authority can be found in such texts as the following:

Thy eyes beheld my unformed substance; in thy book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. Ps.139:16.

During a Talmudic discussion concerning the correct time of day for sexual relations, there is a comment made by one of the rabbis which reflects this combination of belief in an all-knowing God and the pre-existence of the soul:

...R. Hanina b. Papa made the following exposition: The name of the angel who is in charge of conception is 'Night', and he takes up a drop (of semen) and places it in the presence of the Holy

One, blessed be He, saying, 'Sovereign of the Universe, What shall be the fate of this drop? Shall it produce a strong man or a weak man, a wise man or a fool, a rich man or a poor man?' b.Nid.16b.

In his discussion of rabbinic thought on the subject of foetuses (2), Urbach cites a whole tractate on 'The Formation of the Child' which he ascribes to the school of R. Johanan (3). This Midrash begins with the concept of the pre-existence of souls:

Know, that all souls, those that existed since Adam and those that will still come into being until the end of the whole world, were created in the six days of creation, and are all in the Garden of Eden, and were all present at the giving of the Torah (4).

Since these souls exist, they have to be subject to God's universal eschatological judgment. Our Midrash describes how God sets up the judgment scene for these souls (AB 16.2). It is clearly evident that the righteous are now active participants in the heavenly court as they are in the heavenly Beth HaMidrash (5). In this judgment scene they have taken over the rôle of the ministering angels as God's advisers and consorts (6).

In a similar tradition found in 3 Enoch it is the angel Metatron who has charge over these souls:

Moreover, Metatron sits for three hours every day in the heavens above, and assembles all the souls of the dead that have died in their mothers' wombs, and of the babes that have died at their mothers' breasts, and of the schoolchildren that have died while studying the five books of the Torah. He brings them beneath the throne of glory, and sits them down around him in classes, in companies, and in groups, and teaches them

Torah, and wisdom, and haggadah, and tradition, and he completes for them their study of the scroll of the Law, as it is written, To whom shall one teach knowledge, whom shall one instruct in the tradition? Them that are weaned from the milk, them that are taken from the breasts. (Is.28:9). Appendix to 3 Enoch 48C:12.

This tradition explains the occupation of the souls of the young and unborn while they await the arrival of God's judgment and the World to Come. That time has arrived in our Midrash, and now a decision has to be made as regards their fate. They cannot be denied the World to Come through their own fault since they never had the opportunity to commit sin. The only way they could be excluded would be on account of the sins of their parents (AB 16.3). Thus, in essence, this chapter is a discussion on the question of 'original sin'. Do individual souls inherit the sins of their parents from the moment of their conception, or do they remain unstained until they sin from their own choice once they are born into the world? The Midrash seems to maintain a compromise between these two views. On the one hand in God's mouth we find the argument that God's blessing of the fruit of the womb is dependent on the parent's behaviour. On the other hand, this chapter ends with the tradition that each person's deeds, good and bad, are recorded in heaven for the day of judgment when they will be used as evidence for the judgment of that person (AB 16.7). Although God's initial attitude to individuals is related to their parents' attitude to God, they themselves are responsible for their ultimate judgment (7).

The righteous stand in stark contrast to the angels in their rôle as mediators in heaven between God and humanity (e.g., AB 16.4).

From the outset the angels had jealously guarded their position beside God to the detriment of the human race. The most extreme example of this is the fallen angel Satan who has accused humanity before God from the time of Adam and Eve and throughout every age (8). However, the righteous immediately plead the cause of these unborn souls. When God refers them to Lev.26:39:

And also because of the iniquities of their fathers  
they shall pine away like them.

The righteous reply with Deut.24:16:

Fathers will not be put to death for sons, and  
sons will not be put to death for fathers.

It is soon made evident that although this is a judgment scene reminiscent of the heavenly court, the arguments are rooted in the Torah and the decisions derived from it. This is evocative of the scene of the heavenly Beth HaMidrash described in the previous chapter.

God points out to the righteous that Deut.24:16 refers to 'sons' rather than 'foetuses', the former being recognisable in the form of flesh and blood, the latter perceived only as water (AB 16.3). Thus arguments pertaining to the former cannot be applied to the latter. The fate of the unborn is by no means sure. It depends on the will of God. The behaviour of their fathers and mothers does have a part to play in their fate. God does bless the fruit of the womb, but, as he explains, only when the parents do God's will in the world.

The righteous intercede on behalf of the souls of the unborn and

ask God to raise them with bodies for the World to Come (9). As soon as God responds to the petition of the righteous and raises the fetuses with bodies, the first thing these newly embodied souls do is praise God. The description of the creation of these bodies is drawn from Ez.37:

...Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord. Ez.37:5-6.

The dependency of the Midrash on this passage is obvious. However the two cannot be compared too closely, since in Ezekiel God fleshes out existing bones causing the bodies to be resurrected, whereas in our Midrash God has to make the bones as well because he is creating these bodies from drops of liquid or embryos.

The Midrash proves from scripture that these bodies are eternal (AB 16.5). Existence in the World to Come is referred to in Ps.88:10:

For the dead you work wonders, selah.

The word 'selah' is traditionally interpreted to mean eternal life in the World to Come which is how it is understood in the Midrash. The interpretation of 'selah' as eternity can be found in the Talmud:

It was taught in the school of R. Eliezer b. Jacob: Whenever the expression נצח, לעד, or לעל occurs, the process to which it refers never ceases. b.'Erub.54a.

The souls of the unborn with their newly created bodies can now fully enjoy and have a share in the life of the World to Come (AB

16.6). As soon as they are standing on their feet, they sing before God, praising him for the life he gives in the World to Come, and fulfilling the words of Ps.88:10:

Do the shades rise up to praise thee?

The 'shades' are the souls of the unborn now raised up into new bodies in the World to Come and giving praise to God.

According to Wertheimer the words that are put into their mouths belong to an ancient prayer of the evening liturgy:

בִּידֶךָ נַפְשׁוֹת הַחַיִּים וְהַמֵּתִים אֲשֶׁר בִּידּוֹ נֶפֶשׁ כָּל חַי  
וְרוּחַ כָּל בָּשָׂר אִישׁ

In your hand are the lives of the living and the dead, for the life of all living is in his hand, and the spirit of all human flesh (10).

Our Midrash interprets this to mean that all redeemed humanity, both past and present, partake of God's presence in the new world reflecting the picture painted in Ps.36:

How precious is thy steadfast love, O God! The children of men take refuge in the shadow of thy wings. They feast on the abundance of thy house, and thou givest them drink from the river of thy delights. For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light do we see light. Ps.36:7-9.

At this point the chapter seems to come to a natural end. The number of participants in the World to Come, which now includes those who only enjoyed embryonic life in the old world as well as the righteous, is now complete. There is an added note, however, which reflects the omniscience of God as regards human existence (AB 16.7). Each and every thought and deed of every person is passed



on to him through the firmaments by the angels before it has even occurred to that person. Each person's thoughts and actions are recorded by God's own hand on a tablet and stored up for the Day of Judgment. Here we find the ultimate picture of personal responsibility as regards good and bad behaviour. We bear the responsibility for our actions and, consequently, the responsibility for our eternal destiny.

Our life in the World to Come is dependent upon our life in the present world. Again, the didactic emphasis of the Midrash is clearly evident. If there was a hint earlier on in the chapter during the discussion of the souls of unborn children that personal responsibility was not a factor in redemption, then this final section makes it plain that this is not the case. For us, the souls that are born into the world, there is no escape from the personal responsibility for our each and every thought and deed.

One of the main features of the Midrash, expressed in this chapter and elsewhere (11), is its stress on the physical nature of the World to Come. The righteous souls of the unborn cannot exist in the World to Come, anymore than they could exist in the present world, until they are given physical bodies. Throughout the Midrash the physical existence of God has been emphasised, resulting in stark anthropomorphism at times and thus its description of the World to Come continues this highly physical theology. Any spiritualisation of the afterlife, for example, such as that found in certain strands of western Christian thought, is being clearly rejected.

## Notes

1. AB 15.1.
2. Urbach, op.cit., vol.1, pp.235-254.
3. Tanhuma, Pequde, §3; A. Jellinek, Beth HaMidrash, Pt I, pp.153ff.
4. Urbach, op.cit., p.245.
5. AB 15.4ff.
6. Earlier in the Midrash, the angels discussed the creation of humanity with God (AB 4.1), as well as being active participants in the judgment of Satan and his retinue (AB 7-9).
7. There is no evidence in the Midrash of the type of original sin adopted by Christianity through the work of St Augustine. For a discussion on the differences between Jewish and Christian understandings on the origin of sin see, A. P. Hayman, 'The Fall, Freewill and Human Responsibility in Rabbinic Judaism'.
8. A point clearly illustrated in AB 8.1-2.
9. The formation of bodies from embryos in this world and the World to Come is discussed in Lev.R.14.9.
10. Wertheimer, Battei Midrashot, vol.2, p.453.
11. See e.g. AB.6; 18.4-5.

17.1. Resh Teth - Because he sees and an ear inclines to the sound of the song of the unborn. And he established strength and splendour for the glory of his majesty from their mouths, as it is said, From the mouths of babes and sucklings you have established strength because of your foes, to destroy the enemy and the avenger. (Ps.8:2).

2. When the Holy One, blessed be He, sits in session, he calls each one by name and makes them sit one by one at his left side, one by one in his bosom, one by one upon his neck, one by one upon his shoulder, one by one upon his throne, one by one upon his glory.

3. He is like a man who sits in his house with the table arranged before him. He has many sons and daughters who, when he invites them to eat and drink, come and sit, one on his right and one on his left. And they drink in front of and behind him, two at his head, two at his feet. And they all surround him, and all his sons and daughters. And the householder is glad and rejoices with them around the table. So the Holy One, blessed be He, will sit in session in the World to Come, and all the members of the World to Come will sit before him, and all the unborn who died in their mother's womb and did not enter the world, the Holy One, blessed be He, brings them to life in the World to Come for the sake of his great name. And a thousand thousands are seated at his right hand, and a myriad myriads at his left hand, and myriads of thousands in his bosom, as it is said, as it clings... (Jer.13:11).

4. He gives them all kinds of delicacies to eat, and feeds them all kinds of sweet things; and he gives them some juice of pomegranates and perfumed wine to drink. And he satisfies them with the elixir of life and he refreshes them together with the righteous ones, members of the World to Come, with all the good things of the World to Come, as it is said, I will lead you, I will bring you etc. (Sg of Sgs 8:2).

5. And all the days of the World to Come are: a feast and a party, a celebration and a holiday, a joyful cry and a thanksgiving, an exultation, a joyful cry and a shout, praise and blessing, rest and security, life without pain, holidays without grief, and many years without trouble and without distress, and without the evil inclination, and without the angel of death, without fear and without trembling, without strife, without judgment, without weeping, without crying, without war, without dissension. For in all the world is peace, as it is said, And the meek will possess the land (and delight themselves in much peace). (Ps.37:11).

6. What is the proof that there will be 'a feast and a party'? As it is said, The meek will eat etc. (Ps.22:26). And 'forever' is nothing other than the World to Come, as it is said, They are established for ever and ever. (Ps.111:8).

'A celebration and a holiday', what is the proof? As it is said, And the righteous will rejoice. (Ps.68:3).

'A joyful cry and a thanksgiving', what is the proof? As it is said, Shout for joy, O righteous etc. (Ps.33:10).

'An exultation', what is the proof? As it is said, Jacob shall exult. (Ps.14:7).

'A shout for joy and a shout', what is the proof? As it is said, Thus says the Lord, 'Shout for joy etc'. (Jer.31:7).

'Praise', what is the proof? As it is said, They bless your glorious name etc. (Neh.9:5).

'Rest and security', what is the proof? As it is said, My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation etc. (Is.32:18).

'Life without pain', what is the proof? As it is said, And there will be life for your soul etc. (Prov.3:22).

'Holidays without grief', what is the proof? As it is said, They will attain joy and gladness... (Is.35:10).

'And many years without trouble', what is the proof? As it is said, And I will take out the heart of stone... (Ez.36:26). This is the evil inclination that was called 'stone', as it is said, A stone is heavy and sand weighty, (but the fool's vexation is heavier than both of them. (Prov.27:3).

'Without the angel of death', what is the proof? As it is said, He swallowed up death for eternity etc. (Is.25:8).

'Without fear and trembling', what is the proof? As it is said, There is no fear of God etc. (Ps.36:10).

'Without strife and crying', what is the proof? As it is said, There will not be heard in it etc. (Is.65:19).

'Without war and dissension', what is the proof? As it is said, Bow and sword... (Hos.2:20, Heb; Eng.2:1).

'For all the members of the World to Come live in peace', what is the proof? As it is said, And I will give peace in the land. (Lev.26:6).

7. Futhermore, the righteous say before the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Lord of the Universe, we know that you are mighty, full of mighty deeds, powerful and strong. You are full of all praises, and you never tire, not with the works of creation which you created, nor with the works of the Last Things which you have created anew. You never get exhausted in going down or coming up. For you made everything by speaking, by the breath of the mouth. And by a command you marked out and suspended the world like a shining light, you filled it full of all kinds of delicacies, you sweetened it with spices and pure balsam. You increased praise in the height and in the depth, you caused the splendour above and below to be great. From your glory you showed the foundations of things above and below. Now may it be your will that the throne of glory come down below to the earth to expound before us in session words which the ear has never heard.' As it is said, ...never... (Is.64:4).

8. The Holy One, blessed be He, replies and says to them, 'Righteous of the world, saints of our God, heroes of the Torah, pursuers of righteousness, great ones of wisdom who are in every generation, do I not have the power to make a new throne, a chariot and a wheel, a canopy and glory, pillars of fire, clouds of lightning, swift clouds and messengers of wind, gleaming bronze of brightness? And also [flaming] attendants to serve my glory below as they serve above? To do for you precisely according to your will, just as you did my will in the days of old. And to give as your inheritance a share, a good reward, in the new life of the World to Come. I have many treasures, as it is said, To cause those who love me to inherit substance etc. (Prov.8:21). What are 'their treasures'. It teaches

that each righteous one will inherit in the future age from before the Holy One, blessed be He, one thousand two hundred and twenty eight good treasures, each one full of the good things and delicacies of the World to Come. This is the value in gematria of 'their treasures'.

9. What will the Holy One, blessed be He, do then? He stands up from his throne of glory and gives his throne and his glory and his crown and his sceptre and the garment of his majesty and the robe of his honour and the gift of his splendour and the brightness of his Shekinah and his horse and his driver and his messenger with him and his sovereignty and his chariot and his attendant and his glory which is in the height of the heights as an inheritance to each righteous one in the World to Come.

10. As it is said, He raises up the weak from the dust, (he lifts high the needy from the ash-heap to make them sit with princes, he will make them inherit a throne of glory, for the columns of the earth are the Lord's, and upon them he has put the world). (1 Sam.2:8).

'He raises up the needy' - this is the day of the resurrection of the dead. For the Holy One, blessed be He, raises all the righteous up from the dust, for they are called 'needy', as it is said, The poor people. (2 Sam.22:28). 'Poor' and 'needy' mean the same. And why are they called 'needy'? [Because they are needy] and poor in this world, but they become wealthy and are held in honour in the World to Come. 'He lifts high the needy from the ash-heap' - for the Holy One, blessed be He, lifts their horn in glory from the earth up to the height of the firmament. 'To make them sit with princes' - for

the Holy One, blessed be He, sits them before the throne of glory like kings, for they are called princes, as it is said, The princes of the people gather, (the people of the God of Abraham, for to God belong the shields of the earth; he is highly exalted). (Ps.47:10).

11. 'He will make them inherit a throne of glory' – for the Holy One, blessed be He, gives them as an inheritance all the pleasures of the throne of glory that are in the height. 'For the columns are the Lord's' – this is the World to Come. 'And upon them he has put the world' – this is the land of Israel which is called the world, as it is said, The heavens are yours... (Ps.89:11).

12. Thus he creates his new throne, his new glory, his new chariot, and his new horse and his new wheels, his new abode, his new temple, his new altar, his new tabernacle, his new attendant and his new ministers, and new clouds of fire and new clouds of flame, and new sparks and flashes of lightning: his new greatness, perfect and new.

13. And he comes down with great glory from the heavens with mighty brightness, splendour, beauty, delight, light and illumination, to welcome the presence of the righteous in the World to Come, like a father who welcomes his first-born son every day, as it is said, In righteousness I etc. (Ps.17:15). And what does 'I shall be satisfied' mean? It teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, lets go thousands upon thousands, myriads upon myriads of sparks of brightness, sparks of stones, sparks of splendour, the appearance of the light of the Shekinah from the brightness of the Shekinah of



the Holy One, blessed be He, two for each righteous one, one for each eye. On account of it they awaken from their sleep in this world, and they were sitting engaged in the words of the Torah, and all of them were glad before the throne of glory, and rejoiced before the Holy One, blessed be He. Concerning that time David said, In your presence is the satisfaction of joy. (Ps.16:11).

14. At that time all the righteous grow strong. The brightness of the light of their eyes is like the sphere of the sun, and they see from one end of the world to the other in one glance. And they can see by night as well as by day. But the sun and the moon, the stars and all the constellations, even though in this world they make use of the brightness of the Shekinah by day and by night (because the nations of the world worship them and prostrate themselves and minister before them with sacrifice and offering with spices and incense), suffer change in the brightness of their light as between day and night. The sun is not powerful by night but by day, and as soon as it sets, the power of its brightness is changed. The moon and the stars and the constellations have their power only by night. As soon as the time of dawn arrives, their light is changed before the brightness of the globe of the sun. And the same applies to the brightness of the light of a bonfire and the brightness of a torch. Although they are admired by human beings and are beautiful night, as soon as the sun rises, immediately the brightness of their light is changed because of the brightness of the light of the sun. But the brightness of the light of the Shekinah, which the righteous make use of in the World to Come, is not changed by any kinds of lights that are in the world, as it is said, The sun shall be no more your

light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night; but the Lord will be your everlasting light...Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.  
(Is.60:19-20).

15. What is written after [it]? 'Your people shall be righteous'. These are the righteous of the world. 'They shall possess the land', because they possess the World to Come for ever and ever and ever. 'The shoot of my planting' - this is the Messiah who is called the shoot, as it is said, There will come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. (Is.11:1). 'The work of my hands, that I might be glorified' - this is the good of the World to Come, as it is said, By the fruit of your works the earth is satisfied. (Ps.104:13).

The chapter ends.

In the previous chapter the number of participants in the life of the World to Come was completed when the unborn children were raised up with bodies by God to join the ranks of the righteous. As soon as they were raised up they opened their mouths in praise of their Creator. This chapter continues the story with God's response to the children's song. A banquet is prepared and all the population of the World to Come sit round the table like a family with God at its head. The chapter continues by detailing the myriad eschatological pleasures that are to be enjoyed, each proved by recourse to scripture. The chapter contains a further interpretation which continues the theme of the pleasures of the World to Come found in the main body of the chapter, including a description of the creation of a new throne of glory for God's dwelling place. Much of the material contained in this chapter touches on subjects and themes that have been discussed already in earlier chapters of the Midrash.

The letters ׀"ך give two verbs to prompt the start of the chapter. The letter ך is found in the verb ךאך 'he sees'; and the letter ׀ in the verb ך׀ן 'to incline (the ear)'. These verbs describe God's response to the children's song.

The children and the rest of the righteous sit round God at the eschatological banquet (AB 17.2). This seems to be distinct from the banquet described in chapter eleven at the close of the messianic battles fought against Leviathan and Behemoth, and Gog and

Magog(1). There the corpses of the defeated primordial monsters provided the food for the feast. Here the menu seems far more appetising comprising the exquisite delicacies of the World to Come.

The picture painted is one of an intimate family scene. God is surrounded by those he can love and trust since they have proved their love and faithfulness for him. They are the focal point and reason for the creation of this new world, just as they had been for the old world. God had intended this scene for all his first creation, but humanity and the angels had failed him. Now only this righteous remnant remains, and by virtue of their righteousness, they can share with God in the new creation. God had created the old world for Israel alone because they were to be a witness to him through their observance of the Torah (2). Those who followed that pattern are now members of God's family, living and eating with him in the World to Come.

The description of the unborn children now raised up with bodies in the World to Come, clambering over God paints a striking picture of God as a human father lovingly embracing and playing with his children. Perhaps the reason why some of the contents of this passage do not appear in Wertheimer's edition is that this vivid anthropomorphic vision of God veered too dangerously towards blasphemy (3).

The Midrash describes this eschatological scene with the help of a parable to underline its intimacy (AB 17.3). In this parable God is

compared to a human father. In the opening chapter of the Midrash where God decided to create the first world, he was called 'father'. Likewise when he produces the rewards awaiting the righteous in the new world he is once more called father. This is the most apposite title to use in these instances since it is at these times that God can be intimate with the objects of his creation. In the beginning he created the world out of his love for the idea of Israel who would be his own people in the world bearing witness to him through their observance of the Torah (4). But humanity turned away from God. His initial intention to dwell on the earth in the Garden of Eden is thwarted through humanity's disobedience (5). God leaves the earth to dwell in the heavens as he is no longer on intimate terms with humanity. He is not only isolated from humanity, but also from any of the heavenly creatures. The picture of God given by our Midrash after humanity's disobedience is one of a recluse:

They (the princes of the Presence) have no authority to go up or to go down to the secret house of the Shekinah, but only the Holy One, blessed be He, himself, because it is his secret house and he dwells alone, in secret from them all.  
AB 4.9.

Now, in the World to Come God can be Father once more. He can dwell with the people he loves and who love him. The initial picture of the first creation is made reality in the World to Come: God and humanity living in intimate harmony together.

According to the parable God is like a father sitting down at table. He has invited his many sons and daughters to eat with him.

They come and sit all around him making the householder a happy man. Similar pictures of the lucky individuals who will be allowed to share in the unique eschatological banquet are found in the New Testament. But there the exclusiveness theme is more explicit rather than implicit as in the case of the Midrash:

When once the householder has risen up and shut the door, you will begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us.' He will answer you, 'I do not know where you come from.' Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets. But he will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you come from; depart from me, all you workers of iniquity!' There you will weep and gnash your teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out. And men will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the Kingdom of God. Lk.13:25-29 (6).

Both the New Testament texts, and others which describe an eschatological banquet exclusively for those who are righteous in God's sight, are dependent on a passage from Isaiah addressed to the wicked:

Therefore thus says the Lord God: 'Behold, my servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame; behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart, but you shall cry out for pain of heart, and shall wail for anguish of spirit.' Is.65:13-14.

Those who share in the banquet, according to our Midrash, are countless. Because God is the father of this family, its size transcends the human model. To describe the closeness of this family, despite its size, we are referred to a verse from Jeremiah

where Israel's relationship to God is compared to a close fitting garment:

For as the waistcloth clings to the loins of a man, so I made the whole house of Judah cling to me, says the Lord, that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory, but they would not listen. Jer.13:11.

Although such a hope was not realised in Jeremiah's day, it is in the World to Come.

As we noted above (7), it is unusual to find such detailed descriptions of life in the World to Come. The usual answer given by the rabbis to such speculation was to refer to Is.64:4 (Heb.64:3):

For of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen God besides thee, who works for those who wait for him.

This verse itself became a source for speculation about the World to Come. In a passage in the Talmud it is explained by reference to the wine reserved for the World to Come, that is to say, the very wine that is being drunk by the righteous at the feast described here:

What is the meaning of No eye has seen? R. Joshua b. Levi said: This is the wine that has been preserved in its grapes from the six days of creation. b.Ber.34b.

In chapter 6 we were told of the great abundance of produce that would be available to the inhabitants of the World to Come:

Because he is going to put into the time to come rivers of wine, rivers and rivers of oil, rivers and rivers of honey, rivers and rivers of delicacies, rivers and rivers of sweet things,

rivers and rivers of pure balm, and all the mountains dripping new wine, and all the hills honey and milk...These are the reward of the righteous in the World to Come. AB 6.10-11.

The biblical text that is used in AB 17.4 as evidence for the reality of the feast is Sg of Sgs 8:2. The context of this verse, that of the joy of two lovers, again underlines the intimate atmosphere intended by the author of this scene set in the new world:

I will lead you, I will bring you to the house of my mother who taught me; I will give you spiced wine to drink, the juice of my pomegranates.

The World to Come is presented as one big family party. In positive terms, for example, it is full of feasting and drinking, praise and blessing. In negative terms it is without trouble or distress, weeping or war. The evil inclination (יֵצֶר הָרַע), and the angel of death are absent in the World to Come. According to Resh Lakish, Satan, the evil inclination and the angel of death are one and the same (8). All were created by God, but their negative power must be balanced against the Torah, also created by God, which enables humanity to overpower them. But this struggle will not be continued in the World to Come. Instead it is a world of שְׁלוֹם.

Each promise of perfection made by the Midrash is endorsed by scripture. To prove that the evil inclination will disappear in the World to Come, the Midrash identifies it with the word 'stone' in the quotation from Ez.36:26. Prov.27:3 is also cited:

A stone is heavy and sand weighty, but the fool's vexation is heavier than both of them.

Here the word כָּעֵם 'vexation' seems to be identified with the יֵצֶר,



in another text where a stone is mentioned (9). The evil inclination, which had been the source of sin and death in the former world, will not exist in the World to Come. The alienation between God and humanity, which had begun when Adam and Eve had followed their evil inclination (10), will not be allowed to happen in the new world.

AB 17.7 begins another interpretation which continues the description of the World to Come. It begins with the righteous addressing God and praising him for his great works of creation. Then they ask that God's presence, his throne of glory, should dwell below on the new earth as it had done during the first days of creation. The theme of an early chapter of the Midrash was the journey of God's presence from its dwelling in the Garden of Eden far away from humanity to the seventh heaven (11). Now in the new world, in response to the request of the righteous, God proposes to create a new dwelling place for his presence. A similar eschatological vision of the descent of the presence of God from the new heavens to the new earth is found in the New Testament in the book of Revelation:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth...and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them. Rev.21:1,3.

The righteous request his presence so that they can share in his expounding of the Torah on earth, in contrast to chapter 15 where they had participated in the heavenly Beth Midrash. God tells them that there is no need for him to transfer the throne of glory from its place in the heavens to earth since his power is more than

sufficient to create a new throne, as glorious as the first, especially for the new earth. The new throne will serve the needs of God below on earth, as the original one serves his needs in the heavens above.

The regaining of the throne of glory for the earth forms part of the reward of the righteous in the World to Come along with God's crown, sceptre and the rest of his kingly paraphernalia. To a large extent the contents of AB 17.7ff repeat those of chapter 10 where God clothed the righteous for the World to Come. However there is one major innovation here and this is in relation to the throne of glory. In chapter ten the righteous were given all the trappings of majesty which, in their entirety, were the preserve of God alone. But they were not given his throne. In chapter ten we cited a passage from Midrash Rabbah about how various items of God's kingly apparel had been given to certain individuals throughout Israel's history. This includes God's throne:

Who is the King of Glory? Why did they call God 'King of Glory'? Because he assigns glory to those who fear him. The proof is that one must not ride on a horse or sit on a throne of a mortal king, yet God placed Solomon on his throne, as it is said, Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king. (1 Chron.29:23). Ex.R.8.1.

This excerpt from Midrash Rabbah is part of a larger passage which identifies various individuals with items of the trappings of God's majesty. In Midrash Aleph Beth all the items together are to be the possessions of each and every righteous individual who has been raised up for the World to Come.

The amount of the inheritance of the righteous is then given in gematric terms, just as in chapter 6 the abundance of nature's produce in the World to Come had been calculated. The gematria is based on the word **אוצרותיהם** 'their treasures', although, as Wertheimer notes, it is hard to see how the number 1228 was arrived at (12).

The Midrash starkly contrasts the righteous in their new found trappings of glory and majesty with the poor and needy people they were in this world. This theme of the exaltation of the humble was present in chapter 15 where the nation of Israel, Abraham, Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon are all shown, by means of biblical proof-texts, to be worthy of the name 'righteous' because of their humility (13). The same theme can also be found in the Talmud:

R. Jeremiah questioned R. Zera: What is meant by, The small and great are there (i.e. the World to Come); and the servant is free of his master (Job 3:19)? Do we then not know that 'the small and great are there'? But (it means that) he who humbles himself for the sake of the Torah in this world is magnified in the next; and he who makes himself a servant to the (study of) Torah in this world becomes free in the next. b.Bab.M.85b.

Similarly, St Luke's picture of the eschatological feast referred to above, concludes with the following comment:

And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last. Lk.13:30.

Having dressed the righteous in appropriate regalia for the new world, God creates the new throne that is to be situated below, on the new earth (AB 17.12). When the Midrash describes the creation

of the present world in chapter 2, the creation of the throne of glory is inseparable from that of the heavenly creatures, as can be shown in a passage where God surveys his newly made world:

Then the Holy One, blessed be He, looks and sees his throne and his glory and his Shekinah and the seat of his honour and the holy creatures and the Ophanim and the Cherubim and the troops (of angels) and the armies, who are standing in the height of the world. He opened his mouth in praise of himself and he said, 'I have done well for I have established a place for my glory'. AB 2.5.

In the new world God creates a new throne of glory specifically to belong in the province of righteous humanity on the new earth. The heavenly creatures have no place in the World to Come. When God destroyed the former world, the heavenly retinue was completely annihilated:

Nothing was left of them (the heavens and the earth) except the throne of glory alone and the Holy One, blessed be He, dwelling upon it in his glory, on his own... (14). AB 5.6.

Again in this chapter, the intimate relationship between God and the righteous is conveyed by means of the image of fatherhood. This time it is made yet more poignant. The righteous are compared to first-born sons, evoking God's words to Israel prophesied by Hosea:

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. Hos.11:1.

For their part the righteous can enjoy seeing the face of God, something denied to all creation, even Moses, the servant of God:

...you cannot see my face; for man shall not see me and live... Ex.33:20.

Using words from Ps.17, the Midrash shows that in the World to Come all barriers between God and man will be broken down:

As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with beholding thy form. Ps.17:15 (15).

God awakens the righteous from their sleep in this world to life in the World to Come (AB 17.13). As a father wakes up his child from sleep and protects its eyes from the light of day, so God aids the sight of the righteous giving them sparks of light as bright as the Shekinah so that they can see his face. The phrase from Ps.17:15: 'I shall be satisfied', is interpreted to mean that the righteous will be physically able to look at God's presence when it comes down to earth. The eyes of the righteous become so powerful that they can see as well by night as by day. In this they are superior to any luminary in the sky which either loses its power by day or by night. God provides all the light in the World to Come, and, as Isaiah prophesied, there will be no need for sun or moon: 'The Lord will be your everlasting light' (16).

The most evident theme in this chapter has been the intimate atmosphere that awaits the righteous in the World to Come. The scene is one of a family reunion. The children at this party are the unborn children who have received bodies for the World to Come. God is the loving and indulgent Father who plays with his children, and enjoys the company of the family he loves. Now that all the problems of the former world have been solved, God returns to dwell with his family, as he had intended from the beginning. The anthropomorphism that we have noted throughout the Midrash

reaches one of its most developed stages here where God is not simply called 'father', but behaves like, and experiences the emotions of, a human father.

## Notes

1. See AB 11.1 and commentary.
2. AB 3.3.
3. Hebrew text notes to AB 17.2.
4. See AB 3.2-4 and commentary; cf AB 15.
5. AB 4.5-6.
6. See also e.g. Rev.19:9; Lk.22:30. In the New Testament the Christian rite of the eucharist reflects this combination of exclusivity and eschatological hope; see especially 1 Cor.11:23-29.
7. See, e.g., AB 6 and 10 and commentary.
8. b.Bab.Bat.16a; for a discussion of the two inclinations in humanity, good and evil, see Urbach, op.cit., vol.1, pp.471-483.
9. Cf. b.Yoma 69b where **וְיָד** appears as a variant for **וְצַד** in the Munich ms; also, A.P. Hayman, 'Rabbinic Judaism and the Problem of Evil', p.470, n.1.
10. AB 4.5.
11. AB 4.
12. Wertheimer, op.cit., vol.2, p.455.
13. AB 15.25.
14. Cf AB 13.1ff.
15. This verse is discussed in the context of biblical language used for the doctrine of resurrection of the dead in Judaism by Sawyer, 'Hebrew Words for the Resurrection of the Dead', p.233.
16. Is.60:19-20, referred to by the Midrash; In the New Testament's Book of Revelation the same theme from Isaiah is used, again in an eschatological context where God's glory has descended from the new heavens to the new earth: 'And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever' Rev.22:5.

18.1. Shin Yodh - A gift which is bountiful. Shin Yodh - Because he is called El Shaddai, and all the righteous bring gifts before him in the World to Come, as it is said, To you kings bear gifts. (Ps.68:30). And what are the gifts they bring before him? These are: a gift of righteousness, a gift of acts of piety, a gift of uprightness, a gift of faith, a gift of mercy, a gift of peace. For they acted in this world for the afflicted and the poor, for the needy and for the weak, and for the oppressed. And they will go straight into the World to Come, they and their righteous acts with them, as it is said, Your righteousness will be before you etc. (Is.58:3). Then the Holy One, blessed be He regards them as if they are bringing gifts before him, and they greet him, as it is said, For I desire love and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. (Hos.6:6).

2. What does the Holy One, blessed be He, do then? He stands by himself and arranges each and every righteous act that is in the hand of each one before the throne of glory, and he gives them a good reward for each one, as it is said, And great goodness to the house of Israel. (Is.63:7). - even for each and every word which a man speaks to prevent strife between his fellow men. A man takes for them a good reward corresponding to a righteous act and good deeds. And what is the reward he takes for them? It teaches that his light will rise like the light of the sun in the darkness, and gloom will depart from the appearance of his face, as it is said, And you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the afflicted person,



and your light will shine in the darkness and your gloom will be like the noon-day. (Is.58:10).

3. And also, a good thought that a man thinks in this world although he might not be able to act on it, will still be rewarded in the World to Come, as it is said, For those who feared the Lord and thought on his name. (Mic.3:16). And what is the reward that he takes? It teaches that they write it before him in a book of remembrance for merit alongside the righteous, and so he may inherit the life of the World to Come, as it is said, And it was written in the book of remembrance before him for those who feared the Lord and thought on his name. (Mal.3:16).

4. Why? So that they may eat and be satisfied by the good things of the World to Come, as it is said, The Lord will lead you continually, and satisfy you with good things. (Is.58:11). 'The Lord will lead you continually' - this is the rest of the World to Come. 'And satisfy you with good things' - these are the delicacies of the World to Come by which all the righteous of the world are satisfied. 'And he will make your bones strong' - for the evil inclination will not have power over them. 'And you shall be like a watered garden' - neither excrement nor a bad smell come out from their orifices. And furthermore, each orifice will give forth honey and milk, and the scent of herbs like the scent of Lebanon, as it is said, Honey and milk are under your tongue, and the scent of your clothes is like the scent of Lebanon. (Sg of Sgs 4:11). 'Like a spring of water whose waters fail not' - this means ejaculations of semen which do not cease in the World to Come, 'whose waters fail not' for each

and every righteous one who enters into the World to Come. And also their wives come with them into the world to Come.

5. As it is said, For he gives to my beloved sleep. (Ps.127:2). 'Beloved' is none other than wives, as it is said, What has my beloved in my house? (Jer.11:15). And all the righteous have sexual relations with their wives in the World to Come, but they do not get pregnant nor give birth, and they do not die, as it is said, They will not labour in vain etc. (Is.65:23).

6. 'Not in vain' - because they do not labour for nothing or for what has no substance as they did in former days, as it is said, And they said, 'In vain have I laboured. (Is.49:4). 'And not bear children for sudden destruction' - for never again will they bear children for Gehenna. 'For they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord' - for he will not cut them off, or their seed, from the world. 'And their offspring with them' - for they come, their wives and their children with them, to the World to Come.

The chapter ends.

Whereas the previous chapter emphasised the gifts given to the righteous by God, in this the penultimate chapter of the Midrash we are told of the gifts brought to God by the righteous when they enter into the World to Come. Towards the end of the chapter the subject switches to the type of physical existence to be experienced by the people of the World to Come.

The letters **ו"ש** open the chapter and give us the noun **ש'ו** 'gift'. The letters also suggest to the author of our midrash God's title **אל שדי** 'El Shaddai', usually translated 'Almighty God' which is used here. In Gen.49:25 the same name for God is found in the context of the rewards of heaven:

...by God Almighty who will bless you with  
blessings of heaven above.

The gifts that the people offer to God in the World to Come comprise all the righteous thoughts and deeds they had been responsible for in the former world (AB 18.1). These gifts affect the character of the World to Come ensuring that it will be a place of righteousness filled with good deeds, uprightness, faith, mercy and peace. Hos.6:6, a passage which suggests that God prefers a pervading and internalised attitude of love and obedience to external gestures such as animal sacrifices, is used as a proof-text to show that the righteous reflect God's will in their lives. Is.58:10-11, a text which combines the concept of social justice with rewards from God, also features in this chapter. When it is set alongside the passage from Hosea a clear picture of God's

appreciation for behaviour that reflects his righteousness and his justice appears. The righteous who are receiving the rewards of the World to Come are the embodiment of such behaviour.

In response to the gifts of the righteous, God rewards each righteous individual, and each good thought and deed for which they have been responsible. Even the good thoughts that a person might have had but was not able to act on, are to be rewarded in the World to Come (AB 18.3). An account of the conduct of each individual has been recorded in a 'book of remembrance'. This is not a collection of evidence, used to decide whether an individual can enter the World to Come or not, such as is mentioned in 2 Baruch:

For behold, the days are coming, and the books will be opened in which are written the sins of all those who have sinned, and moreover, also the treasuries in which are brought together the righteous of all those who have proven themselves to be righteous... 2 Bar.24:1 (1).

Rather, our Midrash seems to be referring to a document which contains only righteous deeds. It cannot be used to punish any individual, but only to add to their reward in the World to Come.

The Midrash repeats the theme of the previous chapter by noting what is present and what is absent in the World to Come (AB 18.4ff). Again we are told of the delicacies of the new age as well as the absence of the evil inclination (2). It introduces new ideas concerning the physical nature of the World to Come when it discusses the sweet smell of the new humanity and their sexual

activities (2a). The main biblical text used in this short chapter is Is.58:11:

And the Lord will lead you continually, and satisfy your desire with good things, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

All the various phrases in this verse are interpreted in terms of the quality of life in the World to Come. The phrase: 'And you shall be like a watered garden', is taken to mean that the righteous will be sweet-smelling. Another biblical text is introduced to add further proof:

Honey and milk are under your tongue, and the scent of your clothes is like the scent of Lebanon. Sg of Sgs 4:11.

This same text is used in rabbinic literature to refer to a variety of things. In one example it refers to God where, in a passage from Ex.R.17.2, various texts, particularly from the Song of Songs, are used to describe God. In another it is used in reference to the Torah:

The Torah is compared to five things: water, wine, honey, milk, and oil...Whence to honey and milk? As it is said, Honey and milk are under your tongue. Deut.R.7.3.

One of the closest parallels to the passage in our Midrash is also found in Deut.R.7 where the clothes that the Israelites wore in the Wilderness are discussed:

...So too as their clothes were of a heavenly make, the cloud rubbed against them without damaging them. He (R. Eleazar, the son of R. Simeon b. Yohai) asked him (R. Simeon b. Jose): 'Did not vermin breed in them?' He replied: 'If in their

death no worm could touch them, how much less in their lifetime!' He asked: 'Did they not emit an evil odour because of the perspiration?' He replied: 'They used to play with the sweet-scented grass around the well, the fragrance of which permeated the world.' Whence this? As it is said, And the scent of your clothes... Deut.7.11.

As in the Wilderness so in the World to Come there will be none of the foul odours associated with human existence.

The phrase: 'Like a spring of water, whose waters fail not' (AB 18.4), is interpreted to mean semen, and this introduces the question of sexual activity in the new age. According to the Midrash the resurrected bodies of the righteous will produce semen, and their sexual desire will be met by their wives who will accompany them into the new world. This point raises a number of questions. First, there are to be sexual relations in the World to Come; secondly, the group referred to as 'righteous' are exclusively male; thirdly, the only means of entry into the World to Come for women is through the merit of their husbands; and fourthly, that the women are present primarily to serve the sexual needs of their husbands since the begetting and rearing of children are not part of the new life.

It is unusual to discover a description of the World to Come that includes sexual activity. The more common view is that sex is an activity that belongs to this world since it is inextricably bound to the command for this world, given just as its creation was completed, to procreate and fill the earth (3). Midrash Rabbah contains a comment which supports this distinction, although in the

context of a contrast between earth and heaven rather than this world and the next:

...The celestial beings were created in the image and likeness (of God) and do not procreate, while the terrestrial creatures procreate but were not created in (God's) image and likeness. Said the Holy One, blessed be He: 'Behold, I will create him (man) in (my) image and likeness; (thus he will partake) of the (character of the) celestial beings, while he will procreate (as is the nature) of the terrestrial beings.' Gen.R.14.3 (4).

In the New Testament there is an echo of the same teaching. The gospels contain an account of an argument between Jesus and the Sadducees on the question of resurrection from the dead. The Sadducees ask Jesus that in the case of a woman who marries and is widowed by seven brothers consecutively, which of the brothers would be the woman's husband in the resurrection. Jesus replies as follows:

Is not this why you are wrong, that you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. Mk.12:24-25.

The concept of sexual activity in the World to Come accentuates the physical nature of that existence (5). The idea that the physical existence of humanity in its entirety along with material rewards and physical wellbeing is to be present in the new age expresses an unqualified belief in the goodness of matter (6). According to scripture, God had created a material universe which in its pristine condition he had declared to be good. His new world could be nothing other than the perfect fulfilment of that same creation (7).

In chapter 14 the Midrash makes it clear that women are capable of being righteous in their own right:

...upon them was the world established. And they are: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; Moses and Aaron; David and Solomon. And in the same way that the world was established for their sakes, so it was established for the sake of their wives... AB 14.3.

According to this later chapter of the Midrash the righteousness of these women could be said to be redundant since they would enter the World to Come in any case because of the righteousness of their husbands.

As in the case of everything else in the World to Come, sexual relations between husband and wife reach their perfection. No longer is sex associated with child-birth, which was a blessing but also a burden in the former world. It was the duty of couples to procreate, but the disobedience of Adam and Eve had led God to punish women with the pain of labour in producing children (8). The new age is modelled on the original Garden of Eden where no such pain existed. We are justified in referring to God's punishment of Adam and Eve to clarify this passage since it continues with reference to man's work. Adam's punishment for his disobedience is to work the land, as God says to him: '...in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread' (9). Furthermore, we are told that there will be no death in the World to Come, again negating a punishment meted out to Adam and Eve. There will be no need for women to bear children because their own children will join them in the World to



Come, nor will men need to toil since God will provide for all their needs (10). And all of them will live for ever.

In this chapter the Midrash reaches its climax as far as its emphasis on the physical nature of the World to Come is concerned. Not only are the righteous to have their appetites satisfied with good food to eat and wine to drink, their sexual desires too are to be met in this new age. Although we were told in previous chapters that the righteous would have the appearance of angels in the World to Come (11), this similarity does not extend to their still human characteristic of sexual desire.

## Notes

1. See also b.Hag.15a where we are told that Metatron sits in heaven recording the deeds of humanity ready for God's judgment.
2. See AB 17.6 where it is demonstrated from scripture that there will be no evil inclination in the World to Come.
- 2a. Such bliss as this in the World to Come is reminiscent of Islam, see e.g. the Qur'an, Surah 55. The implications of this influence as regards the dating of the text are discussed in the introduction, see above pp.33-37.
3. Gen.1:28.
4. A fuller version of this discussion can be found in Gen.R.8.11.
5. This was noted in AB 16.5 where God raised up bodies for the unborn souls.
6. For a discussion of rabbinic thought on the question of the physical and spiritual nature of humanity see Urbach, op.cit., vol.1, pp248-254.
7. In AB 8.6ff the Midrash dismisses any possibility that God could not have been responsible for the creation of such things as the physical earth.
8. Gen.3:16.
9. Gen.3:17-19.
10. For the details of the produce provided by God in the new age see AB 6.
11. See AB 13.3; 14.21.

19.1. Tav Kaph - Because he will share out and examine and divide the fruits and the delicacies of the World to Come for each and every righteous one according to the reward for his deeds, to each and every pious person according to the reward for his deeds, to each and every wise person according to the reward for his deeds, to each and every intelligent person according to the reward for his deeds, and to each and every leader according to the reward for his deeds, as it is said, Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, (and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he has poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin for many, and made intercession for the transgressors). (Is.53:12).

2. What does 'Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great' mean'? It teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, has sworn, according to the prophet Isaiah, that: 'I will apportion for each and every individual who is in Israel, a share, a good reward, according to his works, with the righteous in the World to Come.

3. 'And he shall divide the spoil with the strong' - these are the fathers of the world: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the kings and prophets, and holy ones and the clean, the innocent ones and the pure who were among them in Israel.

4. 'Because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors, and he carried the sin of many' - because they

were martyred for the sanctification of the name of the Holy One, blessed be He. Jealousy is as cruel as Sheol. (Sg of Sgs 8:6). - for they distance themselves from his counsel, and from the jealousy of Korah and his congregation who went down, when they were still alive, to Sheol, as it is said, And they went down, they and all etc. (Num.16:33). And he was counted among the dead because they are accounted as dead in this world. Therefore they inherit the life of the world because they are called living, as it is said, Enjoy life with the woman... (Eccles.9:9). - 'the days of your life' is not said here, but 'all the days of your life' of the world.

5. 'And made intercession for the transgressors' - because they were pleading for mercy from before the Holy One, blessed be He, for all the transgressors that are in Israel to atone for their transgressions and their sins, for there is no 'intercession' except through 'intercessors', as it is said, Hear me and intercede for me. (Gen.23:8). Another interpretation: 'intercession' is nothing other than 'prayer', as it is said, And you, do not pray for them. (Jer.7:16).

6. Another interpretation [of Is.53:12]: 'Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great' - it teaches that the text can only correspond to Moses who will receive a reward in the World to Come corresponding to the great and the mighty and the honoured who are in Israel.

7. 'And he shall divide the spoil with the strong' - because he takes spoil and great wealth corresponding to the fathers of the world:

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, kings and prophets. For there are no 'strong' ones spoken of here except the fathers. Why are they called 'strong'? Because they are strong in their greatness and in their righteousness and in their honour in the World to Come.

8. 'He was numbered with the transgressors' - because he was numbered with the dead of the wilderness and did not enter the land of Israel.

9. 'And made intercession for the transgressors' - because he stood in twenty four places in prayer and in supplication before the Holy One, blessed be He, and he sought mercy for them, for Israel, and he restored them in repentance before the Holy One, blessed be He, in order that they might not rot in their sins.

10. Therefore he receives a good reward corresponding to all of them in the World to Come. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, begins his praise of Moses before all the righteous and says to them, 'Do you not know what Moses, my servant, did in the world? He put into practice my righteousness and my kindness to the sons of men, and he taught my justice to them, to Israel, as it is said, He put into practice for Israel the righteousness of the Lord and his judgments. (Deut.33:21).

Concluded to the Glory of God, Lord of the Universe.

If I have made a mistake in what I have made,  
may God, my Maker have mercy on me.

I, El Nathan the Priest, son of R. Eliezer the Priest, wrote this  
Midrash for my own benefit, to meditate on it in peace and security

וְעַל מִנְיַן הָאֵלֹהִים .

Blessed be he who reads it,  
and cursed be he who steals it.

There are two parts to the final chapter of our Midrash, both centered on the interpretation of Is.53:12. In the first part this verse is interpreted in terms of the righteous in general, and martyrs in particular. The second part takes Moses as the righteous martyr par excellence. He is the supreme example of an individual who fulfils the prophet Isaiah's description of a servant of God who suffers vicariously for the people of God. Moses stands alone and victorious at the end of Midrash. He presents the perfect rôle model for all who would want to participate in the utopian life of the World to Come that has already been depicted in all its tempting glory.

The final combination of letters is ך"ן. Both letters appear in the word ךתןל, apparently from the verb ךן 'to divide, share'. This verb prompts the chapter to open with the recurrent theme of the eschatological rewards for the righteous being shared out in the World to Come and, in turn, introduces the passage from Is.53 which dominates this chapter:

Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

'The great' are said to refer to the righteous, and 'the strong' to the 'fathers' of Israel's past Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the kings, the prophets, all who were pure and innocent (AB 19.3). Their chief

achievement was that they were martyred for their faith. In a previous chapter one of the major accusations levelled at Satan at his trial was that his provocation of Israel over the centuries had caused God to allow catastrophe after catastrophe to happen to his people. The last of these catastrophes mentioned is the martyrdom of the ten wise elders (1a). Martyrdom is presented as the ultimate display of human faith and piety, but it is also something that belonged to a world dominated by the machinations of Satan and his wicked angels.

In Midrash Rabbah the same verse from Isaiah is also identified with Israelites who were prepared to die for their faith and as a result are to be rewarded with the good things of the World to Come. Is.53:12 is introduced to interpret the words of Sg of Sgs 5:1:

I have eaten my honeycomb (יַעֲרִי) with my honey, implies that because Israel exposed (הִעֲרִי) their souls to death in exile – as you read, Because he poured out (הִעֲרָה) his soul to death – and busied themselves with the Torah which is sweeter than honey, the Holy One, blessed be He, will therefore in the hereafter give them to drink the wine that is preserved in its grapes since the six days of creation, and will let them bathe in rivers of milk. Num.R.13.2.

The Midrash explains that those who have been martyred for their faith do not belong to Sheol, the place of death, they are destined for life in the World to Come (AB 19.4). A verse from the Song of Songs is used to show that their death was the result of zeal: 'Jealousy is as cruel as Sheol'. Both the righteous and Korah and his congregation are motivated by the same emotion: zeal. And both share the same fate: untimely death. Although according to



biblical tradition Korah and his congregation are put to death by the hand of God, in later literature there is a tradition known to our Midrash which states that they, like the righteous, are restored to life (2). Thus although they are accounted as dead in the present world they are marked out for life in the World to Come.

The individual described in the passage from Isaiah intercedes for transgressors despite his treatment as a criminal and his execution. Likewise the righteous will intercede in the presence of God for all the sins of Israel. The figure in this verse from Isaiah is referred to earlier by the prophet as the 'servant'. For example, the section which ends with the verse quoted by the Midrash describing the suffering and exaltation of the individual, begins as follows:

Behold, my servant shall prosper, he shall be  
exalted and lifted up... Is.52:13 (3).

Although this passage is written in the third person singular, suggesting that it should be interpreted in terms of one individual, elsewhere the title 'servant' is used collectively to refer to the people of Israel:

Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for  
you are my servant; I formed you, you are my  
servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me.  
Is.44:21 (4).

The Midrash is justified therefore in interpreting Is.53:12 collectively in terms of the righteous since the title 'servant' occurs at the beginning of the section to which it belongs, and in the wider context of the chapters which surround this verse this

title is most commonly used in reference to the people of God rather than one individual.

The second interpretation of Is.53:12 centres on the figure of Moses (AB 19.6), and so in this case it is individual rather than corporate (5). This final part of the Midrash begins by mentioning the greatness of the reward stored up for Moses in the World to Come. Moses ideally fulfils this prophecy since his life was lived in total obedience and service to God. That service involved also being the servant of God's people. He was set in the centre, negotiating between heaven and earth. Moses was counted amongst the sinners in this world because he was not rewarded with the reality of the land of Israel; instead he was punished. Israel remained the promised land for him who died outside its borders:

And the Lord showed him all the land...And the Lord said to him, 'This the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, "I will give it to your descendants." I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there.' So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. Deut.34:1-5.

Moses' punishment comes as a result of taking upon himself God's anger with the people. His punishment was borne vicariously so that the people would not be punished and could realise the promises made to their fathers:

...the Lord was angry with me on your account, and he swore that I should not cross the Jordan, and that I should not enter the good land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance. For I must die in this land, I must not go over the Jordan; but you shall go over and take possession of that good land. Deut.4:21-22.

Like the servant described by Isaiah, Moses intercedes for sinners before God (AB 19.9). In fact Moses is the most effective intercessor in Israelite history in that he saved the people of Israel from total destruction at the hand of God after they had made and worshipped the golden calf:

They made a calf in Horeb and worshipped a molten image. They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass...Therefore he said he would destroy them - had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him, to turn away his wrath from destroying them. Ps.106:19-23 (6).

Moses' achievement of making God repent of his anger against Israel was brought to our attention in an earlier chapter of the Midrash where God sits with the righteous in the Beth HaMidrash in the heavens (7). In that scene only Moses was qualified to interpret the halakic traditions expounded by God to the righteous because of his former rôle on the mountain of God. Moses is not esteemed to be great simply because he was chosen to receive God's Torah for Israel. In that position he forfeited his own self-interest, his own future, and instead acted only for the benefit of the people. Moreover, it was a people that had consistently muttered against him and caused him problems during the forty years he had led them in their wanderings in the wilderness. As intercessor Moses had a unique opportunity to prove his righteousness in God's presence, and in the presence of all Israel.

Moses' reward for such righteous deeds is the greatest of all. He is to receive a reward that is equivalent to all the rewards handed

out to the righteous by God in the World to Come. Moses' merits are epitomised by God when he praises him in the presence of all the righteous. He announces that Moses made known God's righteousness and kindness to humanity. By being the one who received the Torah from heaven, Moses revealed God's nature to the world.

The Midrash does not end as we might have expected with a return to the scene of the eschatological feast where God is surrounded by his countless and beloved righteous ones, instead we are left with one figure, Moses (8). He alone represents the climax of the whole text, and the climax, according to the author, of a pious life led in total obedience to the will of God. Moses has been a key figure throughout the Midrash for the unique combination he presents of personal religious perfection and of being the custodian of God's Torah. Moses and the Torah together provide the key to God's hope for humanity. In chapter two of the Midrash this was depicted in terms of the marriage between Moses and the Torah:

...and he (God) showed him (Moses) to the Torah, and he said to her, 'My daughter rejoice and be glad in this Moses, my servant, for he is destined to become your bridegroom and your husband. He it is who will accept you and explain what you say to sixty myriads of Israel.' AB 2.11.

The didactic purpose of the Midrash remains implicit to the end. The reader is allowed to muse for himself that, if in the World to Come Moses' behaviour is rewarded beyond human imagination, to emulate him would mean a share in that reward, and a chance to share in the presence of God for all eternity.

## Notes

1. The colophon is discussed with the rest of the ms in the introduction; see above pp.1-5.
- 1a. AB 8.2.
2. See AB 14.14, and commentary, where the tradition concerning the congregation of Korah is used to illustrate the point that those who have been condemned to Sheol can still be raised by God's power in the time to come.
3. This verse as it appears in the Targum of Isaiah includes the name of the Messiah.
4. See also, e.g. Is.41:8, 44:1, 45:4, 48:20, 49:3.
5. For another example of the identification of Moses with the figure in iin this verse see b.Sot.14a.
6. Cf. Ex.32.
7. See AB 15.2ff.
8. This concentration on the person of Moses can be compared to that found in Maimonides' Creed, principle 7: 'He was specially chosen by God out of the whole human race...He reached such a state of exaltation beyond ordinary mortals that he attained angelic status and was included in the order of angels...he conversed with God without the mediation of an angel...' Our author, like later medieval writers, would have had to counteract the threats from Islam and Christianity, both of which had personalities at their head: Muhammad and Jesus.

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